NEW TIMES

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May 7–13, 1991

lack nos. 16-17 (O.P.)

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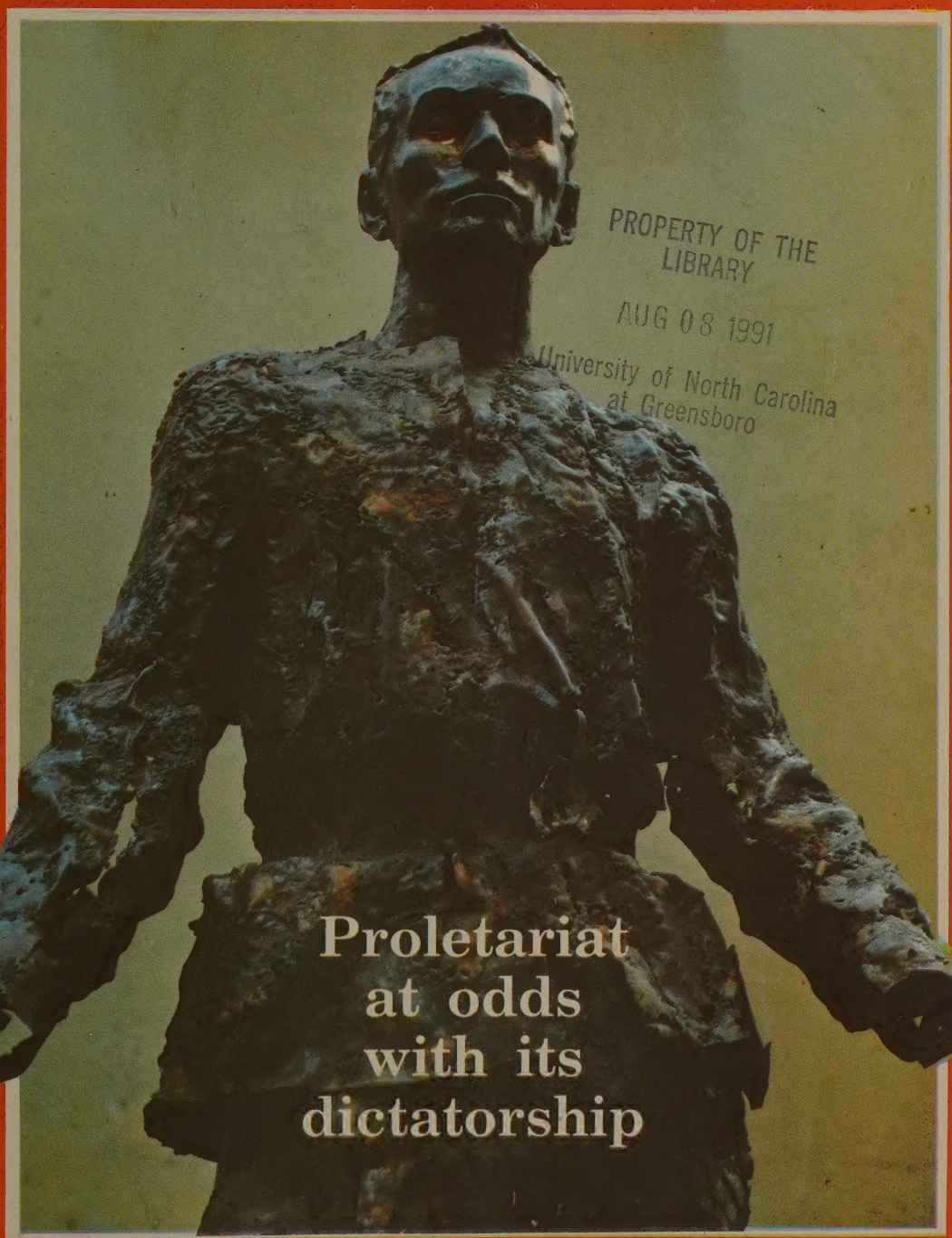

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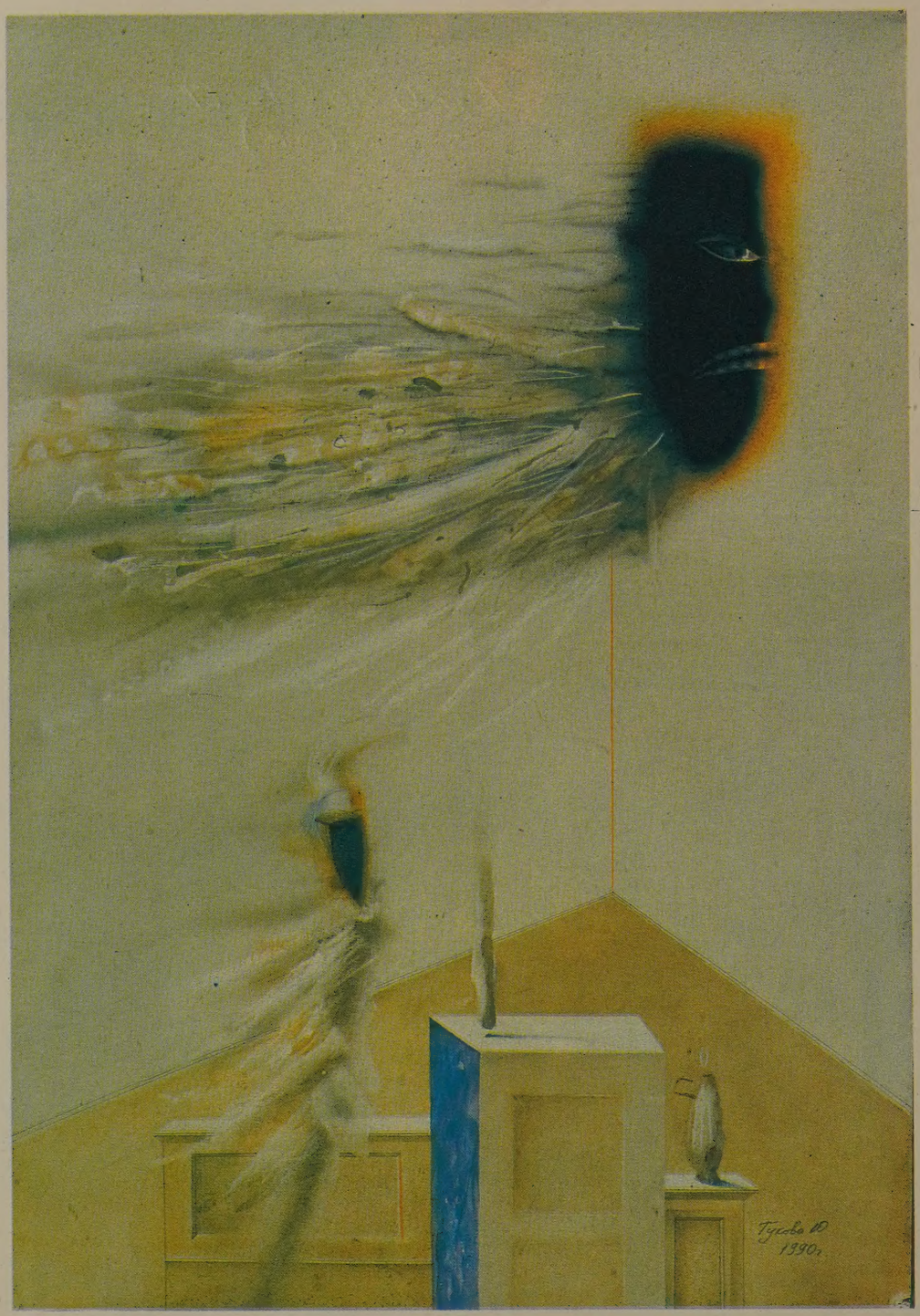

GUKOVA YULIA

A SOVIET WEEKLY
OF WORLD AFFAIRS

NEW TIMES

No. 18, 1991
Founded 1945

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Cover by Victor Brel

Our address: Pushkin Square, Moscow, GSP, 103782, USSR. Telephones: 229-88-72, 209-07-67

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Founders: *New Times* journalists

Published in Russian, English, French, German, Spanish and Italian

Printed by Moskovskaya Pravda Press. Telex: 411164a newt SU
411164b newt SU
Telefax: 200-42-23, 200-41-92
Advertising Department:
209-92-82

© New Times

From our mailbag

■ For more than eighteen months the press, including quite progressive publications, has been using the term "strike" in describing what was going on at the major Estonia-based industrial enterprises under the authority of Moscow. This is a misunderstanding, to say the least.

A strike is an action that is undertaken of the workers' free will and **against** the will and the interests of the owner or the administration.

In Estonia everything is the other way round: the managers themselves order the stoppage of work and shutdown of enterprises. No one gives a damn about the position and the interests of workers. In the main, this is a totally different, although not new phenomenon that is called a **lockout.** And if General Manager of an amalgamation Yarovoi, who is also a People's Deputy of the USSR and a member of the CPSU Central Committee, proceeding from his own political or some other interests, orders to stop the work and threatens the recalcitrants with taking away their bonuses(?!), one shouldn't talk in this case about a strike.

There is a Russian saying: you may call me a pot, but only don't put me into the stove. But in our case the situation is somewhat different, for here the confusion of terms distorts the nature of the phenomenon and puts combustibles into that stove.

G.Rogova,
Cand. Sc. (History)
Moscow, USSR

■ The section "People" (No.5/91) featured an article about Ivan Antonovich. Not long ago, that respected comrade (professor, Doctor of Sciences, secretary of the Russian Communist Party) honoured Tula with his visit. The reason for his visit was a serious one. In his statement he said that a catastrophe had befallen us, that the society had split and is now coming from opposition to confrontation. The secretary of the RSFSR Communist Party Central Committee sees the way out of the existing situation in the following: Communists should immediately go out of the "trenches" and take up the battle positions in order to renew the socialism and defend the achievements of the October Revolution. Brief and to the point! But in spite of the fact that the CPSU still continues to be a political force, it cannot become the force that consolidates the society because the overwhelming majority of the people have long ago stopped

Joined the literary party? – Here is your reward

■ It is with mental anguish that Lev Razgon (No. 1/91 – Russian edition) shares with the readers his impressions of the 7th Congress of the RSFSR Union of Writers. Similar materials have been also published in *Literaturnaya Gazeta, Izvestia* and other publications. In my view, all these sorrowfully-ironic publications have one and the same drawback. The authors of these "sad notes" proceed from the assumption that the Russian congress of writers must necessarily represent the **entire** Russian literature. Hence the questions: why is so-and-so absent? I think that this is a naive way of putting a question in this pluralistic day and age. We should be grateful to the 7th Congress for showing to the readers a number of the well-known literary men in their true colours!

I think that it is time to return to the situation that existed before 1934, that is prior to the creation of the "single and indivisible" Union of Soviet Writers (with the CPSU(B), and later on the CPSU as its patron). Writers can have different artistic and ideological reference points. Consequently, it is impossible for them to exist in the framework of the single professional and creative union. Among the signs of the process of disintegration are the withdrawl from the USSR Union of Writers of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* and a number of "thick" magazines and the creation of The April (but in the framework of the union!) and the parallel associations of poets and prosaists (but in the framework of Moscow Writers' Organization). The restructuring of the "friendly" unions of cinema workers and theatre workers on a confederative basis does not solve the creative questions per se. Any minute they can begin to break down on the basis of adherence to this or that creative method (in favour of socialist realism or against it). In any case, narrow professional guilds have already begun to apear in the Union of Cinema Workers.

Why then don't The April and other groups of literary men close to it leave the Union of Writers? How should one understand that writers' loyalty to a one-party system? Or maybe the members of The April hope to alter the Union from within? Alas, the literary "democratic platform" has very little chances to do it. The explanation is quite simple. Like in the period of stagnation, today the membership of the monopolistic Union of Writers promises one a living wage, if not material benefits. (In our city of Ufa the Bashknigoizdat practically does not publish books without a recommendation of the Union of Writers.) And what is going to happen if there will be ten different unions? Will the nine alternative creative associations be able then to give literary men hope? Or will the mere existence of the Litfond (Literary Fund) do the trick?

Division does not mean confrontation. This would simply institutionalize the existing situation. The groups of concrete authors have already been formed around the magazines *Znamya, Moskva, Oktyabr, Molodaya Gvardiya, Novy Mir* and *Nash Sovremennik*. Maybe there is more sense in their existence than in the organizational patterns of the Union of Writers?

The Housing Code of the RSFSR provides for certain privileges for members of creative unions (with the exception of the Union of Journalists). I have nothing against it. But against the background of the existing situation in the Union of Writers this "additional dwelling space" looks like a reward for the membership of the concrete literary party.

Alexander Kasymov
Ufa, USSR

A strike on the manager's order

"Communists don't come out, stay for a while in your trenches"

A man with a submachine gun on our street

trusting the party (for why then have the Communists found themselves in the "trenches"?) faulting it for the present catastrophe. And the Communist Party will not be able to change itself because from the very beginning it was conceived for taking all the power into its own hands. It might change its "appearance," but it will never change its nature. Having got used for decades on end to keeping the people gagged, the former "ruling influences" started to play the role of "the humble and the insulted" who have been "driven into the trenches," shouting that the mass media had been treating them badly. I don't think that I'll say something new if I express my conviction that the party must repent and acknowledge its guilt before the people. It is time to stop rattling the sabre and coming out of the trenches.

Victor Troitsky,
veteran of labour
Tula Region, USSR

■ Today almost all mass media is outraged that the laws in this country are not observed ("the laws don't work") and stands up for a law-governed state. In reality journalists come out against the laws themselves. And now Vladimir Zhitomirsky (No.5/91) speaks against the President's decree and the two ministers' order on joint patrolling of the streets. However, he does not say it in so many words, but disguises his conviction with forced inventions about the inability of military patrols to put things in order in the streets and possible violations of citizens' rights.

During my service in the Navy I had to patrol the streets of Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Nikolayev and Sevastopol – and I have never seen any violations of human rights. More often than not, we helped the militia to restrain drunk hooligans and protect the rights of people from the encroachments of criminals. And I think that everyone will agree with me if I say that nowadays it is dangerous to come out even in the daytime.

Quite sufficient time has already elapsed since the day when the President's decree and the order of the two ministers were issued, yet I haven't heard any reports about the bursts of submachine gunfire in the streets of cities, although journalists had gone out of their way trying to scare us with their stories! It was Lenin who said that one should not be afraid of a man with a gun. And today we should not fear a man with a submachine gun. If they use weapons, it means that there is no alternative.

S.Babenko,
veteran of war and labour,
retired captain
Sevastopol, USSR

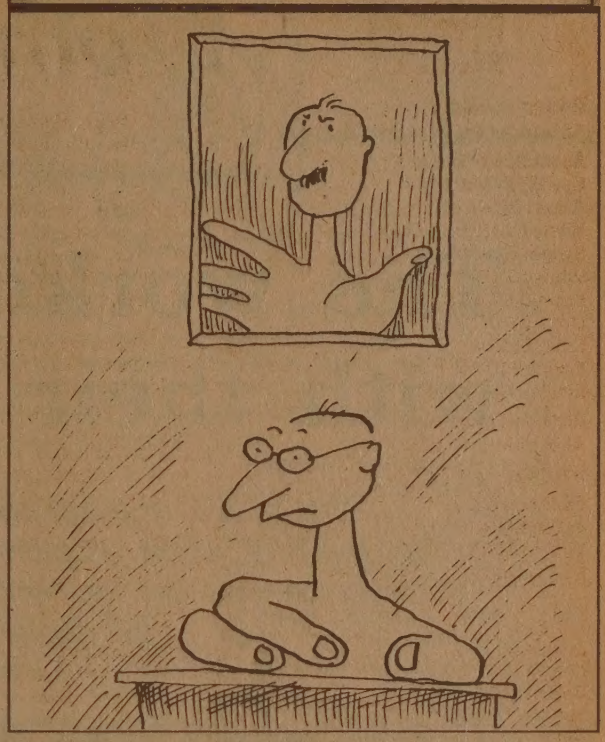
■ After six years of perestroika we have come to a furcation of the road. We are marking time trying to decide which way to go: if we go to the right, we shall come back to what we have been trying to leave behind us; if we go to the left... Forget it! The CPSU with its close ties with the military-industrial complex will not permit any of us to go to the left. Our leaders have decided: "We shall again go our way! We don't have it? We are going to find it!" Everything indicates that this is the case: the general price rise with a scanty compensation, the President's decree on using army units in the patrolling of the cities, the exchange of bank notes and the March referendum.

By the way, apropos of the army patrols. The militia does not have enough forces? Maybe. But why then the President has not issued a decree on the transfer to the Ministry of the Interior of two-three divisions pulling out from the East European countries? Why hasn't he given them to the Ministry of the Interior with all their hardware, equipment and finances, to boot! Then we would have had real reinforced militia details, and not a militia-army tandem. And can you imagine what could happen if some blockheads (Gods forbid) attack such a patrol? I hope you remember what it led to in the Ferghana valley. "At an appropriate moment" (appropriate for certain forces) shots can be fired at soldiers on a patrol duty. What will be the result? Of course: "Company, to arms! Our guys have been attacked." Is it too gloomy a picture? Yes, it is, but quite realistic too. And the people, as usual, keep silent. Deputies have not beheld in the decree anything unusual either. Or didn't they want to?

Oskar Khodzhayev
Turkmenia, USSR

***Compiled by* Tatiana Chernova**

THE WAY I SEE IT



Drawing by Victor Bogorad

If you continue strikes, foreign countries will not help you

■ I am a Canadian woman, fifty years old, raised in a mining community. My father was a worker and my son is also a worker. Therefore I realize the reasons why many Soviet miners decided to strike. I have a deep understanding of their pains and worries, but I am convinced that the continuation and spread of strikes undermine cooperation with the West which is absolutely vital for a reversal of the economic crisis in the Soviet Union – a crisis which is destroying the life of your people. There are many institutions in Canada, the United States, the FRG, France, Italy, Great Britain, Japan and other countries that are ready to work together with Soviet partners. But they say that to go ahead with this work they must have conditions of stability. Surely it is not hard to understand that continuous strikes in the country do not invite anyone, even with the best of goodwill.

Over the past eight months, I have been three times to Kuzbass and I know quite well the privations that have to be suffered by the miners. I can understand the pain, frustration and impatience of workers and their families whose hardships are increased by poor working conditions, insufficient wages, severe ecological and housing problems, lack of food and other consumer goods. There is no question: these problems accumulated over years cannot be solved today or tommorow by the Soviet people alone – the cooperation of people from other countries is indispensable. In the West almost everybody – from governments to the average citizen – is prepared to render such assistance. But all of us are afraid that the situation in the USSR may become dangerously explosive making the cooperation with your country impossible. This is the reason why I am appealing to the striking workers – think for a while what you are doing.

Sally Curry,
Executive Secretary,
World Information
Clearing Centre
on Global Problems
Geneva, Switzerland

DISCUSSION FORUM

The workers at odds with their vanguard?

The heroic working class prepared to fight for the cause of world communism has always been a myth while concern for the workers, a specious pretext for the seizure of power

Leonid Vasilyev

It looks as if something new is appearing in our political life. Properly speaking, it is not entirely new but an aspect unusual to all of us. I have in mind the workers or, more exactly, the working-class movement shaping before our eyes and an even noticeable role it is beginning to play in the Soviet Union. Mass walkouts, strike committees, and spontaneous huge rallies and demonstrations of the kind held in Minsk last month are recent examples of the emerging movement.

Pressing for changes

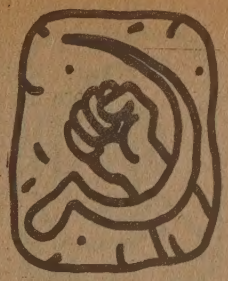
Without trying to make forecasts, I shall mention the experience of Poland. A little more than ten years ago the workers' movement in that country took the first decisive step towards the overthrow of communist power. True, it acted in entirely different but imperceptibly similar conditions.

There is an indisputable and striking analogy here. In Poland, the Soviet Union, Albania and other countries the workers have declared against the Communists and their parties. To be more exact, the workers and ordinary members of Communist parties have come out against their parties as the structures of absolute power in the countries of Marxist-socialist totalitarianism.

Of course, not only workers, and even not workers, are in the forefront sometimes. Young people, students and intellectuals should be mentioned here. Speaking about broad political movements, we should mention the urban population first of all, and it is obvious that the workers play almost a decisive part in them. Owing to objective circumstances, the countries of Marxist socialism do not have the middle class characteristic of industrialized states, and for this reason the workers constitute almost a majority in their cities.

This majority, not very active politically some time ago, seems to become active now and begins to understand the need for not so much an economic reform and social protection as radical changes in the society as a whole. The conclusion is borne out by the demand for the resignation of the President and the central government and by the slogan "Workers for Yeltsin". For all his charismatic prestige Yeltsin is not so much a popular figure deserving public confidence (though it is very important too) as a symbol of pressing radical changes. The old regime must be replaced and, what is the main thing, the bankrupt party must leave the political scene.

Pressure on the part of the workers can, of course, be brushed away on the plausible excuse that the President and the parliament resign only a constitutional way. If one is to be honest, it is not a matter of the way proposed by the workers, who are not very familiar with the subtleties of a law-governed state. The point is that the workers involved in protest movements are opposed, first of all, to the government of the Communist Party. This is how their position should be assessed today.



An experiment that failed

How did it happen that the workers stand out against Communist government? Marxism put forward the slogan, "Workers of all countries, unite!" It was implied that the unity of workers under the leadership of Communists is an earnest of mankind's liberation in the future. Moreover, the Communists regarded the welfare of the working class as the supreme goal of their activity, the goal which justified the means. A violent social revolution was launched for the sake of achieving this goal.

Marxists all over the world have always vowed their fidelity to the cause of the working class. To put it in a nutshell, the working class is the quintessence of revolutionary Marxism, the meaning and essence of the Marxist doctrine. True, it should be said in all fairness that the founders of Marxism made a reservation last century. It turned out that they favoured only poor workers, the proletariat, the have-nots in the full sense of the word. From the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism, those who earned decent wages not genuine workers. They were regarded as the "worker aristocracy".

It is a significant reservation. The workers' welfare was an abstract category for Marxists even in the last century. As soon as people achieved welfare it was censured. Lenin wrote with hate about "so-called economists" who, unlike the Bolsheviks, were bent on improving the workers' life, not establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. The following conclusion suggests itself: as the most orthodox protagonists of the revolutionary Marxism of last century, the Bolsheviks needed not so much workers, and even not the welfare of each of them, as power on behalf of the proletariat.

Leaving the theory aside and taking a look at its practical results, we have to admit the complete failure of the experiment in the name of the welfare of the working class and mankind as a whole. Why was it a complete failure? Why did the theory, still regarded as a scientific doctrine, prove a utopia? Why did the dictatorship of the proletariat, which seemed a noble and scientific idea to revolutionaries, has led to the ruthless and unlimited power of the party apparat?

A utopian idea creates myths. The heroic working class, prepared to fight for the cause of world communism, has always been a myth, even when the Bolsheviks managed to win round the workers of the Putilov or any other plant in revolutionary Petrograd, when detachments with unlimited powers were formed of starving workers to confiscate grain from the peasants, or when the workers living in barracks – peasants who had been dispossessed of their land or had run away from collectivization – built the industry of the Stalin empire.

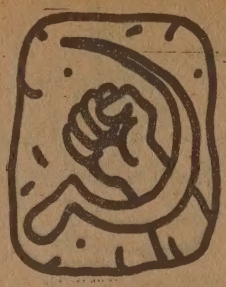
The hegemony of the proletariat

Nevertheless, the workers (not those who were promoted and unscrupulously manipulated) were no more than a draught force of the regime. Incidentally, this also refers to other sections of the population. Other sections, especially office employees and specialists, were paid so little for their highly skilled labour that the workers' wages could seem preferrable, however miserable they may be. This was regarded by everyone as proof of the fact that the working class is the leading force.

The workers and, incidentally, other sections of the population had nothing to do with the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat. It is important to note that they have never had any relation to the dictatorship – neither under Lenin nor under Stalin or after him. It was not at all the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was the dictatorship of the party which seized absolute power. It was the party of a new type, different from traditional parliamentary parties which give up power if the people vote against them.

In backward Russia the proletariat – quite different from how it is described

in Marxist works intended for industrial Western states – constituted only several percent of the population. But Marxists sought to gain power even in countries which did not or almost did not have such a proletariat (Mongolia or Nicaragua can be recalled here). The workers were merely a specious pretext to justify the seizure of power. Marxists needed power for the sake of a social experiment. Perhaps it was worth carrying out the experiment without workers, though for the sake of their welfare.



They were warned

Marx, Lenin and their contemporaries were warned about the possible consequences of their reliance on violence, the dictatorship as a means of achieving a bright future. These warnings became a terrible reality in our country. Were they simply gloomy predictions or predictions guessed by chance?

The people who refuted fine Marxist myths – from Bakunin and Proudhon to Plekhanov – were by no means reactionaries or gloomy prophets. They justly pointed to the consequences of unlimited power in general, and especially in the country with strong traditions of state violence in the style of Oriental despotism.

The rejection of private property and of a free market of competing producers closely connected with it – a fundamental political and economic principle of Marxism – inevitably leads to a society of violence, arbitrary rule and despotism. Such a society is inevitable because, having been deprived of property, the people lose everything else, namely freedom, the independence of thinking and of the individual in general, resistance to outside pressures, and dignity.

The central authorities decide what part of wealth to give and to whom. Precisely in this lies the immense power of the central authorities and the state apparat in general. It is ridiculous to call it workers' power or at least acting in the name of their interests. The central government does not need workers as such. It needs merely producers. Horses or robots could appear in this capacity. On the whole, workers realized their position, even if vaguely, drowning their sorrows in drink and taking vengeance for their miserable life by pilfering whatever possible from their factories.

Our classic formula – "to feed the people" – is revealing. The regime under which the people are unable to feed themselves and the authorities must feed the people means arbitrary rule and despotism. The victorious Marxist socialism inevitably led any country to such a regime. It is simply unable to create different regime because the latter needs different foundations, first of all private property, a free market, the freedom of the individual protected by a rule-of-law state.

In the late 1980s a strike became a form of the expression of protest and demands for improving the conditions of the life and raising wages. It is not a matter now of whether these demands were real in conditions of a general crisis of the Marxist regime. The main thing should be stressed here. No matter how the workers were duped by official propaganda in the recent past, it became clear to them thanks to glasnost and new reporting that they should put forward their demands to the authorities. In other words, the strikers who advanced economic demands convincingly demonstrated to the world that the workers in our country – just as in Poland when the Solidarnost enjoyed great influence – do not regard the Communist Party government as their own, more than that, they regart it as being alien and hostile to themselves.

The workers who stood out against the party apparat with their economic demands are changing before our eyes, first of all because they are beginning to advance political demands too.

What is true in Marxism

Nevertheless, Marxism has some correct points. It is true that, as a result of the progressive worsening of the situation and under the influence of appropriate indoctrination, the workers pass from economic to political demands. It is true that in the final count the world is governed not by the subjective intentions of good people (though this should not be underestimated) but by objective processes determined by fundamental structural factors, first of all the character of a country's regime. It is also true that no one will voluntarily cede his power. What follows from all this?

The workers are no longer content themselves with promises of small wage increases, for they understand that this pittance will be devalued tomorrow. Hence it is necessary to change the very system of power, the social and economic system, take practical steps towards a market economy, and bring about privatization. Instead of talking about the socialist choice and, the more so, about the vague utopian communist prospect, we must build a society which has demonstrated its economic effectiveness throughout the world. The Marxists call it capitalist society, though little has remained in it of the classical capitalism of last century, the time of Marx, except its foundations – private property, a free market, a law-abiding state, civil society, and parliamentary democracy.

It is not enough to say, however, that the workers come to realize all this gradually. It is more important to note that they are going over to appropriate actions, and rather decisive ones. This is best of all demonstrated by the miners' strike which began in March and still continues in spite of exhortations from above. A feature of this strike is the priority of political over economic demands. The miners want their enterprises to become economically independent in view of the emerging market, and press for a double increase in their wages in view of price hike and for some other substantial privileges, including those in pension security. At first, the new premier of the USSR did not take the miners' strike and, the more so, their political demands seriously.

Early in April the miners' representatives met with government officials. However, the pits which are not on strike were mainly represented at the meeting. The parties agreed on terms of satisfying the economic demands, advantageous first of all to the nonstriking miners. The premier's cunning intention was evidently to show the striking miners that they should not have stopped working.

The miners will have to wait for the promised double increase in their wages till the new year. The premier's financial genius prompted him that he would lose nothing by giving promises of this kind, because hyperinflation would eat away all the promised wages rises by the end of the year and the treasury would not incur losses. What was the final outcome of the talks? Those who received promises of wage increases (that is, those who did not strike) were apparently satisfied more or less. Those who were on strike did not stop it and continue to insist on their political demands.

What Yeltsin can do

I think that the striking miners can drop their political demands, but under one essential condition: the central government must make concessions, agree to a compromise. What does it mean? It is well known that the political demands of workers, first of all miners, are today demands in support of Yeltsin, the Russian republic leadership, the democratic forces of the country.

It is not accidental that at a recent special congress of the Russian parliament Yeltsin was almost implored to intervene in the strike in the belief that he could settle the dispute. Yeltsin replied with good reason that he could not make promises as long as he did not have the authority to fulfil them. In my opinion, this statement played almost the decisive role at the final sitting of the congress. The deputies overwhelmingly voted to grant emergency powers to Yeltsin and simultaneously passed an important decision on the holding of presidential election in Russia next June.

I am not going to reduce the whole matter to the miners' strike. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the working-class movement (not only the miners, but also the workers of Minsk) has drastically turned the scale in favour of Yeltsin and Russian democracy.

Will Yeltsin be able to use the powers granted him by the congress and what can he do by relying on them? I am afraid that the result will not be promising very much. I wish I were mistaken. There is, however, one promising development, which can even be regarded as a constant political factor. I have in mind the working-class movement which has loudly declared its political demands and goals. The miners can be followed by workers in the oil and gas, steel and engineering industries. The internal situation is growing worse while the government's plans of overcoming the crisis inspire little optimism.

And here I return to the point I made in the beginning of the article. The political activity of workers and their democratic or, more exactly, anti-communist orientation are new significant circumstances to be reckoned with.

We should not labour under a delusion, however. The workers will hardly be enthusiastic over the prospect of a market economy. They will hardly be pleased with the appearance of rich people whose incomes will sharply contrast with the poverty of the unfortunate and unemployed. It is quite possible that various neo-Marxists and the numerous champions of the socialist idea will take advantage of the workers' discontent. The working-class movement is likely to be split, and only a part of it will steadily back the democrats. But even in this case the role of the organized workers' movement as an integral part of the general democratic offensive cannot be overestimated. That is why the unity of the democratic left and workers – also a favourite, and quite realistic, idea of Marxism – can be regarded as almost the chief earnest of success in the struggle against totalitarian socialism.

I shall return to the question already posed in the article. How did it happen that the workers came out against the ruling Communist parties? What is more or less true in Marxism now turns against these parties. Let me recall US Ambassador Matlock's eloquent remark concerning the Soviet television comment on the March strike of miners. A commentator denounced international solidarity with the striking miners, assessing it as almost interference in the Soviet Union's internal affairs. The ambassador noted that the newspaper *Pravda* still carries the slogan, "Workers of all countries, unite!" and that solidarity with the striking miners had a direct bearing on it. The point is that the regime is hostile to the miners' interests.

The workers' action against the communist-built regime is not a fortuity and, the more so, not a result of some intrigues, as the authorities hint at times. On the contrary, it is a natural reaction of workers to the regime hostile to them and identified with the Communist Party. The workers and the state apparat have become antagonists. The course of events has divided them, and their political interests too. Today the workers support the left, those who are trying to change the regime.

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A table in a battlefield

Igor Bunin,
Yuri Markov

Mikhail Gorbachev says he knew that the system was rotten even before Konstantin Chernenko's death. Today it is obvious that the system is so rotten that it starts falling apart

The system is straining its last reserves. As the radical economist, Yavlinsky, put it, the system is already scratching the spoon against the bottom of the pot. In the past few months the government has tried all ways to overcome the deepening political and economic crisis.

The rulers, the ruled and the president

In the **political** sphere the attempts to resort to "tough counterreform" made in the Baltics boomeranged at the Centre by the drop in domestic popularity, a loss of international prestige and consolidation of opposition forces. The farcial repetition of the Baltic scenario in Moscow on March 28 evoked contempt rather than fear in society. The all-Union referendum containing a barely pronounceable question and originally invented as a way to give an aura of legitimacy to the central power only aggravated the centrifugal tendencies and promoted the idea of the new USSR as a community of sovereign states. The Communists' "coming out of the trenches" (Gorbachev's uttering) and the attempt to topple Yeltsin resulted in Yeltsin's getting extraordinary powers and the setting of the date when people all over Russia will come to the polls to elect their president.

In the economic sphere the government's measures to stabilize the national economy have not served their purpose, but only dealt another blow at the economy tattered as it is.

Strikes and walkouts have become the background music of this country's life. The idea of a nation-wide political strike calling for the resignation of Gorbachev, the Cabinet and the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR and for the formation of a government of national trust has spread widely across many key branches of the national economy and whole regions. The only thing that still prevents the contemplated political strike from becoming a reality is the presence in several republics (Russia, Kazakhstan, and partly, the Ukraine) of popularly trusted bodies of political power. In the republics where people do not trust the authorities, though, the strike movement goes out of control (like in Byelorussia, for example). Strikes will grow more and more frequent as people will be running out of the food supplies they had hoarded up before the Pavlov government's price hike.

It is important, though, that outside Central Asia and Transcaucasia massive popular movements have so far been peaceful and non-violent. As one of the strike leaders in the Donetsk coal field, Ivashchenko, put it, "strikes are the best way to avoid bloodshed." This is confirmed by the slogans and the atmosphere of political meetings and demonstrations. However, this is true only for the time being.

The introduction of a material law under the slogan "The Socialist Motherland is in Peril" (as has been demanded by the recent plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Byelorussia) cannot but be accompanied by heavy bloodshed. Such bloodshed would be fatally dangerous also for the central power, considering the current situation in society and sentiments in the army. Characteristically, riot police officers who cordoned off the centre of Moscow on March 28, openly told radio correspondents that "their hearts were with the people." In view of all that, the introduction of martial law may be counterproductive for the authorities.

Massive strikes and Boris Yeltsin's ever strenghthening position have demonstrated to the president that, contrary to his expectations at the end of last year, the nation had not moved to the right and that the continuation of his right-centrist, let alone the right-wing, policy only plays into the hands of his political adversaries. In this connection Gorbachev started cautiously re-orienting his policy to the left of centre. The government's anti-crisis economic programme contained free market echoes and played with the idea of reducing this country's mammoth military spendings.

In the past few days Gorbachev has had to step up his re-orientation, since the confrontation of antagonistic political forces has unprecedentedly deteriorated and it seemed that a countdown for a major crisis had started.

Demolishing the USSR

Gorbachev's new political course started developing a new content after his meeting with the leaders of nine republics on April 23. At that meeting Gorbachev and the republican leaders signed the first compromise agreement between the Centre and the republics. The Centre recognized the republics' right to independent decision-making as concerns their joining of the new Union Treaty and agreed that the principle of a union of sovereign states had to be the foundation of the future Soviet state. The Centre also softened on its social policies, while the republican leaders called for halting all economic and political strikes and introducing a crisis-time work regime in the crucial branches, at factories producing consumer goods and railway transport. In the joint document issued after the meeting, Mikhail Gorbachev and the leaders of nine republics demanded restoration of con-

stitutional order across the country and adjustment of Union and republican laws.

At the same time the sides agreed that the Centre's current role was of a temporary character. After the new Union Treaty has been signed and the new Constitution of the USSR has been adopted, new central bodies of power will have to be elected. This means that the Kremlin was finally forced to recognize republican sovereignties and actually agreed that only the existing Union republics will be subjects of the new Union Treaty. On their side, the republics are prepared to legitimize the Centre's role as a committee presiding over the demolition of the bankrupt venture called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In other words, Mikhail Gorbachev has abandoned his former allies: the autonomies which had relied on the Union Centre in their opposition to republican leaderships, members of the hard-liner faction Soyuz advocating "an integral and indivisible power" and CPSU die-hards demanding preservation of "the socialist choice." At the recent plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and Central Control Commission Gorbachev warned that those who opt to oppose the reforms may "be running the risk of finally losing touch with the masses." Gorbachev also assured the plenum that he was prepared to "go to the end" with the "democratic, popular trends in the CPSU" which accepted his policy of reform.

Drawing by Mikhail Zlatkovsky

How the democrats rescued Gorbachev

On the other hand, the democrats are also growing more and more moderate. A number of left-wing politicians have declared they will be content with the resignation of the Pavlov Cabinet and will not insist that Gorbachev go after Pavlov. Even Boris Yeltsin declared during his visit to France that Russian democrats and himself were ready to support Gorbachev if the hard-liners were to try to oust him. "Politically, we are ready to haul the wounded Gorbachev away from the killing ground," Yeltsin said.

In the autumn of 1990 Mayor of Moscow and liberal economist Gavriil Popov suggested that the democrats come to the rescue of the weakening Centre. The April 23 agreement was a helping hand... Such sentiments in the pro-democracy camp and Boris Yeltsin's position can be explained by the fact that for the democratic opposition, as a prominent opposition figure, MP Galina Starovoytova put it, Gorbachev remains a "factor of stability":

This compromise seems to be also satisfactory for the leaders of newly-independent republics. President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan shares Galina Starovoytova's vision of Gorbachev as guarantor of "national stability," but at the same time insists on the formation of a government of popular trust "which would offer a clear-cut programme, have a strong think-tank and suggest urgent anti-crisis measures."

The workers' movement, in particular the nearly exhausted strike movement in the coal-producing areas, is also showing inclinations for a compromise: strike committees in the Kuznetsk coal fields say they would agree to halt the strikes if the mines are transferred under the control of the Russian Federation, in other words, if their immediate bosses are replaced. They regard this option as a dignified way to pull out of the strikes and to continue the struggle against the central government. Said one of the strike leaders: "We will be under the jurisdiction of Russia and the Shchadov ministry (the USSR Ministry of coal industry) will cease to exist. Workers of other key branches could do the same, thus depriving the Centre of the power to apply economic diktat and making the reform deeper."

This does not mean, however, that the fire of confrontation is out. The left, especially the strikers, continue to be suspicious of and even hostile to the Centre. The objective conflict of interests is also there. In this context anti-Gorbachev sentiments may flare up ance again if the Centre tries to use even minimal force in its relations with the rest of the country.

The vociferous right

Said Alexander Yakovlev in a recent media interview: "The conservative and reactionary forces have mobilized and launched a concerted offensive." The devil, though, does not seem as black as it is painted. The right wing is in a state of confusion. The leaders of the parliamentary faction Soyuz, Kogan and Petrushenko, tried to convene an extraordinary congress of people's deputies of the USSR at which to oust Gorbachev, and give his powers to national salvation committees, but originally their motion for an extraordinary congress was seconded only by six deputies.

"The faction Souyz is weak," said People's Deputy Sukhov. "We don't have prominent scientists or well-educated people in our faction. The desire is there, but we can't make it true." Only 140 Souyz members out of the initial 570 attended the recent Souyz congress.

The Communist Party upper crust are dissatisfied with Gorbachev and would love to crucify him. However, they do not want Gorbachev to resign as General Secretary, but to put him under their control, so that, as member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist

Party of Russia, Bryachikhin put it, "to push the leader of the country towards more resolute action."

Only 14 participants voted for Gorbachev's resignation at the recent plenum. In the current conditions the Communist Party, provided of course it is not possessed by the instinct of self-destruction, cannot afford juggling with general secretaries especially those who are also presidents. As the Moscow party boss, Yury Prokofyev said, "It would not be logical to voluntarily strip the leader of the nation of his leadership of the CPSU." Thus, the fear of a power vacuum continues to frustrate any attempts to topple Gorbachev. The CP upper crust are free to curse Gorbachev's policies as long as they like, but they have no other choice but to follow Gorbachev for his resignation from the post of General Secretary would inevitably mean the disintegration of the Party. As for Gorbachev, he feels relatively free in his relations with the Communist Party, because he needs the CPSU as an additional support at his bargaining with the democrats.

The three scenarios

Only recently the observers noted the existence of three most probable scenarios according to which things might develop: a "revolutionary" way, a "round-table discussion", an "uninstitutionalized compromise".

The **"revolutionary"** scenario could have become a reality if Gorbachev has made no tangible concessions to the democrats and has preserved his administration and tough policy. Such actions by Gorbachev would have touched off a wave of public discontent that would inevitably have climaxed in a general political strike, quick demolition of major central power bodies and those bodies' replacement with various transition structures of a confederate type. Gorbachev's new policy of compromise and its relative support on the part of the democratic opposition reduce the likelihood of this first scenario. However, if the "upper crust" refuses to be flexible in the future, the stubbornness of local authorities (like in Byelorussia), deepening economic chaos and spreading poverty may finally result in the destruction of the Centre. This scenario is fraught with a not very long, but unprecedented period of chaos in the economy and politics. The leading role will belong to radical anti-Comunists who would oppose any compromises or consensus.

"Round-table discussion" ("institutionalized compromise").

From the viewpoint of the left-wing political movement Demokraticheskaya Rossiya (Democratic Russia) the round-table discussion will have do define "the terms, stages and content of the constitutional process of the passage of power from the unauthoritative and unpopular Union structures to the democratically-elected institutions." The convocation of a round table will mean a leap to a new form of political process untraditional for the Soviet Union. Gorbachev will not be able to continue his behind-the-scenes intrigues, i.e., he will lose the weapon he uses so skilfully. He will become a hostage of a political agreement reached during the round-table discussion and may face the threat of political loneliness after he has been abandoned by the right-wing, and later probably by the left-wing centrists (provided, of course, he is not supported by a coalition of democrats and CPSU centrists). It is evident that the president will agree to a round-table discussion only if he finds himself under an extremely strong, most probably, extra-parliamentary pressure. As for the CPSU fundamentalists and Soyuz members, for them such a discussion would be tantamount to unconditional surrender. Noted Col. Alksnis, a Soyuz leader: "Round-table discusions were used in East European countries as a direct way to power – the Communists met their opponents at the bargaining table and soon wound up under it." On the contrary, this scenario is the most appealing one for the democrats, especially the moderate wing, because as a result of the discussion they would receive the blessing for power, and later, power itself. The round-table discussion would bring forth new people, new programmes and new political institutions which would lead society through the crisis and towards constructive cooperation.

This scenario can become a reality only if the workers' movement and the democrats are dissatisfied with the Kremlin's concessions.

In our opinion, at least three factors make impossible an East European-type round-table discussion here. First, society has not yet become civil society in its true sense and the new political forces have not yet been shaped as distinctly as they were in Eastern Europe. The democrats obviously lack the resolution to get power, they feel politically weak and their ties with the workers' movement remain fragile. Second, the specific feature of the Soviet political life is the much greater role of individual political leaders than in Eastern Europe. The third difference from Eastern Europe is the Soviet Union's complicated entanglement of ideological, political, territorial and ethnic conflicts. Representatives of all conflicting parties are unlikely to ever meet at the bargaining table.

"Uninstitutionalized compromise." Actually, this scenario is a probable continuation of the political development after the April 23 "agreement of the Nine." As this scenario developed, factories and plants would be going from the Union to republican jurisdiction, the republics would be growing more sovereign and the democrats' positions in the bodies of power would be growing stronger. In other words, in principle this scenario does not differ much from the round-table scenario and means that Gorbachev will have to gradually abandon the policy he has been following since the beginning of perestroika (a synthesis of "democratic socialism" and great-power mentality). However, Gorbachev's rejection of his policies would be much more gradual in this case.

Simulating a round table

There is no doubt that in the long run Gorbachev will have to be satisfied with the nominal status of the chairman of the council of presidents of sovereign states. In the immediate future, though, this scenario allows Gorbachev to sustain minimal damage by dropping the Pavlov Cabinet, current programme and allies while preserving the relative freedom of political manoeuvre. This scenario is the only one allowing the CPSU apparatchiks to preserve the status of the political elite, even though for only some time. This scenario does not presuppose that the CPSU will vanish overnight as an organized political force. Thus, the transition to post-perestroika realities would be more evolutionary, for the new political elite and new political institutions would be actually sanctioned by the leader of perestroika. At the same time this way is the longest and as such, the most painful.

Today this scenario is already being carried out and Gorbachev's deal with republican leaders is one of its first elements. Valentin Pavlov has already offered "representatives of republics and various movements" to become members of his government, thus hoping to buy a greater political base of the regime by selling minor ministries off to the democratic opposition. The Premier calls for "constructive and productive cooperation on the basis of a compromise between order and democracy." In other words, the regime is making an attempt to pass the third scenario for the second. Soon we will see if the administration succeeds to impose its own rules of the game...

■

Russia in the world economy

Ivan SILAYEV, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation, answers questions put by *New Times* correspondent Yuri Lebedev

NT. Do I understand the plans of your government correctly – Russia plans to be independent in the world economy, doesn't it?

Ivan Silayev. The main idea of the new Union Treaty is to grant independence to the republics united by common goals and tasks. Therefore, the main functions and duties stemming from the principle of sovereignty and independence are under the authority of the republics.

Hence, the new Union Treaty expands the republics' opportunities for independent economic activity.

NT. Today the attitudes to the widely-known expression "Help will come from abroad" differ. What do you think about inviting foreign capital and businessmen to our country?

I.S. To take the country out of the crisis situation and achieve a wide-scale development of our economy in the market conditions, we need a real integration with the economies of the industrially-advanced nations. This also includes investments into such basic fields of the economy as the extractive industry – oil, gas, coal and metal extraction and development of logging areas. We would like to invite Western and Eastern partners to our country so that they would take part in introducing the latest production methods and know-how. This will benefit our foreign counterparts too, despite a complex political situation inside the Soviet Union. First of all, we are ready to repay their investments with raw materials or ready-made goods. Second, we'll open up our internal market (in this case I mean the Russian market) for foreign businessmen, and companies manufacturing consumer goods and equipment for agriculture and light industries. We'll create necessary and advantageous conditions for their work and establish preferential customs duties for some goods and remove the duties altogether for others.

NT. What's your opinion on setting up joint ventures in Russia?

I.S. We would like to have deeper roots of joint enterprise both on Russian territory and abroad. Naturally, the Russian business world will receive help and certain guarantees from our government.

NT. Foreign businessmen are very worried about the guarantees for their investments into our economy.

I.S. I would like to reassure our foreign partners and potential investors. We have already created practical guarantees for their work. Joint enterprise, joint production, and even joint ownership of funds and real estate – all this has been approved by Russian laws or will be approved in the very near future. Priority conditions are being formed in the republic for the commercial activity of any foreign businessman. We are paying special attention to production cooperation in the sphere of consumer goods. Foreign businessmen may own stores and small enterprises on Russia's territory. And finally, we intend to give access to our border areas for foreign goods and in some cases even allow their manufacturers to sell them.

Ivan Silayev: guarantees for entrepreneurs

NT. The republics and some enterprises and departments have received the right to appear on the foreign market independently. The republican governments have extended their foreign ties. Not so long ago you made your first official visit to Turkey. How were you received there? After all, prior to this all the ties were established on the Union level.

I.S. From the very start of my visit to Ankara I said that we were not planning to follow any autonomous or independent policy towards Turkey. We can cooperate quite independently with foreign countries, but at the same time, we believe that Russian-Turkish relations are an integral part of interstate relations between the USSR and Turkey. I am satisfied with the results of our talks.

NT. Why did you choose Turkey for your first official visit abroad?

I.S. One of the decisive arguments in favour of our visit to Turkey was its noticeable economic upsurge. We wanted to learn more about the practice and peculiarities of "liberalization of the economy." We were particularly interested in their experience of privatization of industry and denationalization. The reforms in both countries are based on administrative and centralistic principles.

There are quite a few principled differences too, but the similarity of initial positions at the beginning of restructuring enables us to use the Turkish experience in practice. In particular, the determination, rather than a half-way policy, in implementing the programme of economic reforms.

NT. What's the attitude of the Russian Federation's authorities to the proposal of the Turkish President Turgut Ozal to form a zone of cooperation?

I.S. It is very tempting for the Russian Federation: the zone would geographically include part of Russia, other Union republics and some foreign countries – Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania.

We have nothing against the idea of creating a mechanism of economic cooperation of the Black Sea states, all the more so since the interests of all the Black Sea Union republics would be taken into consideration too. We have already started setting up separate zones of free economic development, in particular on the Black Sea coast of Russia. ■

From crisis into chaos

Have we chosen the right path to a market economy?

Anatoly Matlin

The highest and last stage of the ruling bureaucracy is manifested in the epistolary genre. In the last 25 years "the clear-cut and staunch economic policy" of the party and the government has led the economy and society to a breakdown. The best thing in these circumstances is to draw up new programmes for extricating the economy from its crisis. Such a programme was recently offered by the Pavlov cabinet. Having lost the possibility to run the country, the "higher-ups" are trying to persuade the "lower strata" to obey their orders in the future too.

Meanwhile the "lower strata" are going on strike, holding meetings, and even fighting in some regions. Their calm in other regions is deceptive. It conceals the general work-to-rule strike and the campaign of civil disobedience, which can erupt into violence at any moment. The country is in a state of revolution, and the people no longer believe the present government.

It seems the cabinet does not have the data or does not want to make an analysis of the economic situation. Its "programme of action", entitled "Assessment of the country's socio-economic situation", takes a little more than a page. Consisting of general phrases, it has only one figure – the preliminary data showing a reduction of the national income in the first quarter of this year.

With such a "substantiation" of the programme the half-page appeal of the cabinet to support it looks naive, to say the least. It is quite evident that the government just has nothing to say. The government evidently fears to make the facts public, and this means that it is responsible for the present situation. Hence the unity of the miners' demands with the intellectuals' dream of forming a government of public confidence in the country.

Three pillars of the government programme

Perhaps we have a shy premier and his team who do not want to rummage in their dirty linen and offer practical measures? The answer can be found in the second section of the programme entitled "The general conception of an anti-crisis programme".

The conception (with no deadline set for its fulfilment) is based on three pillars:

– "the further liberalization of prices as an essential condition for reviving the consumer market, enhancing the business and resource-saving activity of enterprises;

"emancipating commodity producers, creating an atmosphere for rivalry, and denationalizing industries;

– "the strengthening of the ruble by conducting a tough anti-inflation financial and credit policy, by providing goods support for the ruble through drawing housing, means of production and other non-traditional resources into turn over."

Compared with governmet programmes drawn up a couple of years ago, the only new thing in the conception is the recognition of the need for "emancipating commodity producers." It was reluctantly admitted that 130 years after the abolition of serfdom in Russia the system of serfdom still applies to all commodity producers.

It seems true that a decline in output is connected with serfdom, though it is not proved. One can only guess what is implied by serfdom and how the government is going to abolish it.

20th-century serfdom

The government intends first of all to reorganize the huge Committee for Material and Technical Supply into a state-run contract system. The new body will perform the functions of "a state intermediary" and will be invested with "powers necessary for this purpose."

The volume of powers is evident from the proposal to introduce for two years a special "regime" of the running and functioning of the power, transport, communication and banking systems of the country. It is also evident from the threat to republics that will not sign the new treaty of Union. Settlements with 'their enterprises are to be made at world prices, considering the commercial exchange rate of the ruble. True, the last threat is not serious. Having refused to sign the treaty of Union, republics will introduce their own currency, and it is likely to become freely convertible.

The main thing is that Moscow is going to distribute all the material resources, as it did in the past. There is a new element, however. Goods will be sold to the population at "free", that is, exorbitant monopolist prices.

How does the cabinet intend to abolish serfdom in the sphere of labour resources? It is going to increase the working hours, allow overtime, ban strikes and meetings, stop the practice of electing managers. Such is a far from complete list of measures proposed by the government so that workers would feel "free".

"Double" serfdom exists in our country. Townspeople are sent to work in the countryside while peasants are not given land and other resources for agricultural production. The cabinet intends to solve this problem in the old, usual way. We shall see how it will be able to organize the people for harvesting.

The promotion of enterprise, privatization of industries and demonopolization of the economy could be measures of a genuine reform considered in the seventh section of the programme. The question is whether these measures are feasible. According to the programme, "this work shall be carried out by the State Property Fund of the USSR and respective republican and local bodies jointly with ministries and other departments."

What kind of work is it and what is the government interested in first of all? The cabinet does not conceal its scheme. The main thing is "to work out a mechanism of division between the Union, republics and local Soviets of the shares of Union-run enterprises" or the predominant mass of the country's national wealth.

Again, as 130 years ago, the country is offered the abolition of serfdom – without giving land to peasants.

Free prices for monopolies, unchecked inflation for the government

The cabinet is going to lift restrictions on the growth of prices. By October 1 of this year all prices are to be liberalized. The

The Soviet people are having a hard time. But the government offers an anti-crisis prospect...

people have felt the "effectiveness" of the price-setting "reform" carried out by the government in the beginning of the year. My article on the subject was published in issue No.14 of the magazine.

A new race in which wages and grants will be trying to catch up in vain with the growth of prices is beginning.

The chairman of the State Bank of the USSR Victor Gerashchenko said recently that in connection with the growth of retail prices and tariffs for services the amount of banknotes in circulation would rise from 139 to 180 billion rubles. Since banknotes circulate about 20 times a year this statement means that the volume of goods and services paid for in cash will total about 3,600 billion rubles a year.

In 1989 the total volume of consumer expenditure on goods and services made up 431.7 billion rubles. In subsequent years the real amount of goods and services did not increase and will not increase. Thus, the State Bank of the USSR expects a no less than 8-fold rise in retail prices and tariffs for services compared with 1989. It is an optimistic forecast. Last year prices nearly doubled. Since April 2 of this year they have tripled. Two multiplied by three will be six. By October prices will rise twofold. So it will be a 12-fold increase.

If the government calls it "a tough anti-inflation financial and credit policy" what then the policy of inflation means? Another question inevitably arises here. Why is inflation necessary for our government, why has it steadily pursued this policy since the mid-1960s?

The first reason. Since the latter half of the 1950s industry (taking the postwar period only) has been operating ineffectively. With a more or less constant interval of 6 to 10 years up to 15 percent of all enterprises become unprofitable. There is no competition in the economy, and the question of modernizing unprofitable enterprises or closing them does not arise. That is why the departments concerned find it simpler to conceal the operation at a loss by raising prices. In the past, the decline in the quality of goods was explained by the desire to increase their output. Today we see neither quality nor amount. Inflation directly leads to a slump in output.

The second reason. Futile attempts to develop agriculture with the declining light and food industries, trade, state purchases, transport and storages have resulted in the growth of agricultural production costs. The departments concerned have found it simpler to meet this growth by banknotes than by investing resources in industries producing consumer goods.

The third reason. The market determines investment in the interests of consumers. The system of state planning sets its own priorities in the investment of funds depending on the "importance" of the ministry concerned and not on consumer needs, depending on the ability of the department concerned to make its affairs secret even from the State Planning Committee and the government. Hence the surplus of capital investment with the shortage of material and labour resources and equipment for construction. The policy of capital investment is the main reason for structural imbalance of the economy and one of the principal sources of inflation. The bureaucracy will never give up its right to invest money to enterprises, because it is one of the pillars of existing serfdom for commodity producers.

The fourth reason. In our conditions inflation is not simply the growth of retail prices and tariffs for services. Experience shows that it is a good pretext for the authorities to occupy themselves with the "social protection" of the working people. The majority of the population has not yet understood from whom protection is needed. However, it knows how this protection is carried out. The head of the house management office is not afraid of criticism on the part of tenants, because he distributes the scarce goods allocated for sale. A salesman does not care about buyers, because the shelves are empty. Since every person fulfils different roles during the day the entire population becomes humiliated. People humbly look at any superior in the hope of receiving one more dole from him. Sometimes such a dole is given in the form of banknotes, as was the case recently when every person received a 60-rubles monthly compensation for price rises.

What is needed

Thus, an analysis of another government programme does not inspire hopes. And it cannot be otherwise. Can a way out of the crises be shown by those who have led us into a labyrinth and have proved their inability to take their bearings in it? Hence the calls for forming a government of public confidence.

But that is not all. Two conditions are necessary for extricating the country from its present chaos.

The first – give people an opportunity to work for themselves first of all and restrict the possibilities of appropriating the products of their labour by the state and other people; let people have at least half of the income produced by them.

The second (indissolubly linked with the first) – hard currency is necessary, someone must answer for inflation, the government monopoly on currency must be abolished and free convertibility of the ruble allowed.

One question in conclusion: why were prices cut in 1921, during the transition from "war communism" to a new economic policy or a market economy, and why are they rising during the current transition to a market economy? Have we chosen the right path to a market economy?

Made in "here"

Tatiana Ivanova

Does it pay to develop our planned socialist economy – a waste of effort and raw materials?

The four salesgirls of a Delicatessen shop stand in identical postures and with identical facial expressions: in a row, their backs leaning on a wall, their arms crossed, their thin-lipped faces scowling at us. The counter in front of them is a picture of abundance, by our standards: there are rich shish-kebabs ready to roast, at 17 rubles a kilo; spicy meat rissoles at one ruble twenty apiece; baked mutton at 22 rubles a kilo; cakes at 10, 15 and 25 rubles apiece. The shop was deserted.

On the following day, the food display on the counter was the same, only the rings of onion garnishing the shish kebabs had withered, the rissoles looked stale, and the baked mutton had warped. The cakes showed no outward changes for the worse.

On the third day, the shish kebabs, the rissoles and the baked mutton were a sickening sight, and gave off a putrid smell. The cakes were shining as ever.

On the fourth day the Delicatessen was closed "for cleaning-up."

On the fifth day, the food display was the same, but fresh. The salesgirls stood in the same postures.

I live next door, so I say hello as I enter the Delicatessen. "Well," I ask the girls, "where have all your customers got to?" "Who's gonna buy this muck at such crazy prices?" they retorted, almost in chorus, giving vent to their bottled-up resentment. "How have you disposed of all that rotten meat?" "Thrown it away, that's all..."

A nightmare... A photograph in the *Kuranty* paper showed a garbage can cramfull of cakes. The backyard of our Delicatessen is a paradise for stray dogs.

Help us, good people, help us, send us food parcels. We are dying of hunger here, the poor us. Help the idiots who throw away what they have grown on their own soil, what they have bought overseas, what has been brought in over great distances on board huge ships, unloaded in ports, delivered to meat-packing plants by road and rail, processed there, and then rushed to foodstores. All these products, paid for in gold, rot, perish, turn sour and, finally, go to the garbage can...

Dresses, blouses, skirts, overcoats, bathrobes, trousers and men's suits are back in our department store. They are the same as I remember them, only now their prices are different from those of a year, two or six years ago. Window-shopping is now an interesting, instructive and meaningful experience.

All this has obviously been stashed away pending the price rise. Those who look back with nostalgia to the pre-perestroika and pre-"democracy" times as an era of abundance are well advised to examine this merchandise and to refresh their memory of the kind of abundance they have been missing.

At those times people also used to go from shop to shop and to complain about the meagre choice of the goods they offered. I wonder who is going to buy this grey-brown cardigan with crooked sleeves? This garment has to be unravelled, the wool dyed a more eye-appealing colour, and then knitted into something you wouldn't be ashamed of wearing in public. Or look at that greyish-pink shapeless cloth overcoat – actually a trenchcoat à la Felix Dzerzhinsky – with a polar-fox collar! Will any overweight woman in her right mind put on this "queen-sized" bright-red dress which will make her look like a red hyppo, not a woman? Is this a child's coat? A kid who will put it on won't be able to lower his hands – the sleeves are unbendable. It would make a perfect scarecrow...

Why are all the Soviet-made clothes of such an ugly colour? I know why. The answer is that dye tanks are washed badly, if at all. After, say, a red dye runs out, the tank is filled with that of a different colour-blue, yellow, green, whatever. All the other jobs are done in the same slipshod way.

To think of how much dye, wool, cotton, cloth and fur we are wasting... This is inconceivable. Ours is an economy of the absurd. Our industry is crazy. Our whole life is a delirium...

The vertical links which many are now hankering after, and the breaking of which is seen as the cause of all our troubles, can be restored by means of tanks and submachine guns. Theoretically, it is possible to stabilize this state-run production machine which has now gone seriously wrong. But pray tell me, what for? To ruin more of the good stuff now running to waste? To have more of the battleship-grey dresses, monstrous blouses and ugly boots and shoes around? For our factories to produce more cars which cannot be started, more TV sets which tend to explode, more teacups bearing the pictures of the Lenin Mausoleum of the cruiser Avrora, more combine harvesters without spares to them?

What you see in our department store are neither coats, dresses, nor overcoats. It's the plague. It has to be eradicated like a horrible infection. Those who produce it are paid wages and bonuses, but would rather die than spend a ruble on their own output. They want imported goods. The salesgirls who offer "it" for sale will never even dream of buying a Soviet-made blouse. The People's Deputies who demand that our industry should go back to the pre-perestroika methods prefer foreign-made suits. So what is the bid idea of strengthening our socialist production which is a waste of materials and effort?

Hadn't we lived in a madhouse, the Delicatessen salesgirls would have been offering their rissoles for 50 copecks on the first day, and for 20 copecks on the second day – and would have found buyers for them. They would have charged half as much for their cakes on the second day. They would have cut them into pastries to boost sales. But they would never have thrown those cakes away...

Had the dye tank had a private owner, the latter would have washed it in such a way as to have not a trace of the old dye left. Had this wool been given to knitters clever with their hands, they would have created fantastic cardigans. In the hands of those who really care, the polar-fox, mink and silver-fox pelts, now sewed on to the Dzerzhinsky trenchcoats, would have made works of art...

Today everything is going to the dogs: money, loans, credits, gold, meat, furs, cotton, ore, coal, taxes, intelligence, knowledge, skill, eloquence, laws, reforms. And what is worse, lives are lived out in vain, and hopes leap high only to be dashed to the ground. ■

"The Treaty will be signed but after using force"

American political scientist **John MROZ** answers questions on the situation in the USSR, put by *New Times*

Mr. Mroz, you're just back from the USSR. How would you describe the political situation in our country?

The results of the recent referendum still remain a determining factor. It was a victory of the forces coming out for the preservation of the Union and associating themselves with President Gorbachev. Now they expect your leaders to adopt difficult decisions.

What are you expecting in this connection?

Steps will be taken soon to maintain law and order. It is quite clear to me that in present conditions the use of the army and the internal forces to ensure stability and prevent the country's disintegration will be continued. I am not going to judge your leaders for this. We Americans also had to take hard decisions and apply violence regarding our countrymen. This was the case at the end of Civil War when we faced the choice: abolish slavery and agree to a split or cease our development... The referendum gives President Gorbachev a mandate for taking hard decisions to preserve the existing Union.

There are still two critical points for the USSR: the economy and ethnic discord. What measures can, in your opinion, the USSR leadership take in these two spheres?

Frankly speaking I don't see any practical steps to be taken today by President Gorbachev or any other person in the economic sphere. Much talk is going on in the Soviet Union about "civilized market economy." But nobody could explain me clearly what this meant. Besides, most of your people have no idea what market relations are and where they can lead to. They are simply unprepared for such a sharp emotional, cultural or intellectual turn. Therefore, they will resist the reforms. This process will be harder in your country than in Eastern Europe. Actually it is possible to stabilize the economic situation, stop its decay but the situation in the country cannot be improved radically and quickly, say, in three years.

Politically, my forecast is more optimistic. Your leaders have a real chance to change the situation and sign a new Union Treaty. But this will probably be connected with the use of force at least in Georgia and Moldova and perhaps in some other republics.

What may be the reaction in Washington to such actions of the Soviet leadership?

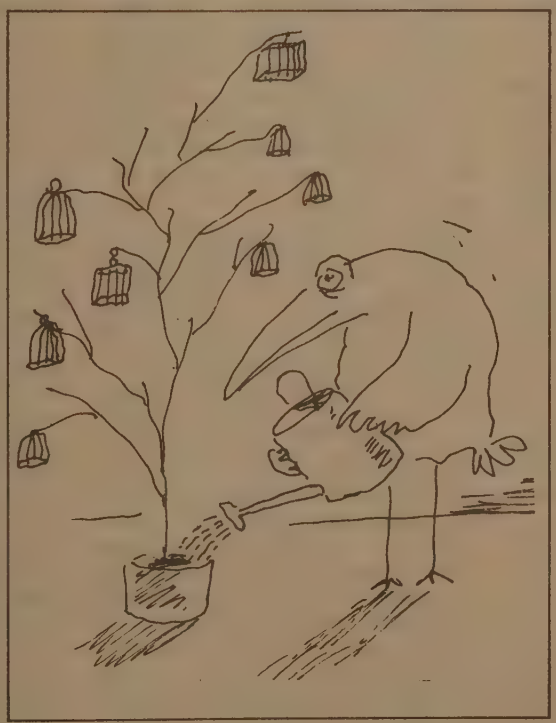
Different. Objectively, the Administration and Congress are interested in preventing disintegration and in having the situation in your country stabilized. However, the US stand on Baltic republics is shaped historically and there are no reasons to think that it may change, moreover Congress is more explicit on this issue than the Administration. As for the other republics, I believe the Administration has no special opinion because it is the internal affair of the Soviet Union.

It is believed that we should take a few steps back towards the command-and-administrative system and then, having improved the economic situation, make another attempt at perestroika in the economy...

I don't share this view. This is also extremism, just like the appeal to effect, despite anything, a transition to market relations.

There are two opposing tendencies now in your society. First, when the country is going through such economic disaster the natural desire is to muster one's strength and try to overcome the crisis. Second, it is a process of decentralization when the republics demand and get ever greater economic independence.

I don't think any of these two tendencies will disappear. Your development tends towards a balance. This will ultimately affect political relations between the Centre and local leaders. Stake on tougher economic measures through a return to the command-and-administrative system will, I believe, result in repressions and won't produce the expected result. At the same time the attempt to pass over straight to free prices or even to raise them considerably by a state decree is also unsound as it may develop into a disaster. Not all Western experts will agree with me but I repeat that in my opinion you can't and must not repeat what was done in Poland. The solution is somewhere on half-way, but perhaps no one in the world knows what will be the solution.



Drawing by Victor Bogorad

Evgeny Andrianov,
our own correspondent

NEW YORK

■

Don't dig trenches in your own home

What can happen when a regime brings troops to its own country

Some time ago I happened to meet former president of Argentina General Leopoldo Galtieri. We met in a cosy cell of a military prison near Buenos Aires where the general was serving his long term for genocide against his own people and the stupid war against Great Britain for the Falkland Islands. These crimes, a surprising combination of primitive calculations, ambitious illusions and senseless cruelty, were committed by the general together with his own and many pervious juntas organized and disciplined so well that the Soviet hard-liner, Col. Viktors Alksnis would envy them.

The general came out to meet me wearing a light-blue summer uniform with modest three rows of decorations. The prison accommodation of the convicted general was much more impressive than any flat in Moscow's prestigeous neighbourhoods, but this is not what really mattered.

"You see an idealist before you, Señor Gerol," the general said bluntly.

A long pause set in. Not that I disagreed with my interlocutor; but I just did not want to disturb the slow parade of thoughts in the brains of Argentina's former military president.

I remembered the thrity-thousand-strong demonstration of wives and mothers of desaparecidos – liberals, communists, democrats and other people whom the generals wanted out of the way and who disappeared without trace.

"Yes," the general nodded and quoted an Argentinean proverb, an almost exact equivalent of Josef Stalin's favourite "you can't chop wood without making the chips fly."

I understand the feelings of my Soviet readers – after all the flying of the chips in the USSR resulted in the chopping of millions of trees. Bur Argentina is a relatively small country and the war the clique of generals had uleashed against their own people in the 1970s sent the nation into a trance.

The civil war inspired and professionally conducted by the Argentinean army which had practically never participated in any combat operations for several decades was the beginning of a 20th century phenomenon known in the political science as "Argentinization of national armed forces."

However, let us now listen to what the general has to say:

"The country was breaking up. The national economy was not on the verge of collapse, it was well beyond that verge," the former president said in a low voice as his medals chimed in tune with his sad recollections. "The left extremists were resorting to terror, the democrats encouraged the extremists in every possible way and the liberals talked bullshit about tolerance and the general understanding of the process. We decided to step in to save the nation. It was a mission of national salvation..."

The Argentinean army which joined WW2 in the spring of 1945 and had no other exploits in its history demonstrated the ultimate in combat effectiveness as it fought its own people. People were arrested, subjected to unprecedentedly cruel tortures, shoved in plastic bags and thrown from planes and helicopters – the pride of the republic's Air Force.

Eventually, the time came to pay the bills. Defeated in the very first fight by the numerically weaker British contingent in the war for the Falkland Islands, which Argentina had invaded with several divisions of ground troops and several Navy squadrons, the army, which had been the object of the nation's pride and affection for over a hundred years, became the object of hatred and contempt. The generals who had fearlessly plunged in politics and imagined themselves saviours of the motherland were sent to prison, and thus preserved their lives.

Since the end of 1983 Argentina has travelled a painful way of democratization, denationalization, demolition of civilian-military and labour-military structures and entered the club of the industrially developed nations. The transformation of Argentina was the beginning of a period during which Latin America's brutal military regimes crumbled one by one. The generals from Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia and other Latin American countries started filling the prisons they had built to accommodate their political opponents.

Unexpectedly, the Argentinean experience has recently been repeated in another country. The despotic and cruel regime of Saddam Hussein, the Soviet General Staff's favourite client, was unwise enough to provoke a war against a United Nations coalition. The Iraqi Armed Forces and their CINC, heartily supported by servicemen, members of the Soviet parliament (the Soviet Union and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania are the world's two countries where soldiers are allowed to sit in parliament), were utterly defeated in a six-week blitzkrieg in which the Iraqi side offered almost no resistance.

The Iraq-posted correspondent of the Soviet military daily *Krasnaya Zvezda*, a major general in rank, which evidently must have ensured high quality of his reports, supposed that the war would drag on for years and that the outstanding military leader Saddam Hussein would yet show his military talents. This viewpoint was readily shared by the numerous colonels who act as public opinion in the right flank of the Soviet political spectrum.

However ridiculous this might have appeared, the colonels knew what they were talking about. The great leader of Baghdad lost the war, of course, but the defeat proved not really important. After all, Soviet generals too had been defeated in Afghanistan, but they are as cock-sure in public as ever before.

The main thing is that the constantly manoeuvring Iraqi army managed to avoid major combat and stay almost intact so as to start fighting its own unfortunate people later. Iraqi troops took the city of Basrah by storm and cracked down on Shiite demonstrations there. It did not really matter that the city was undefended – the Iraqi army demonstrated that Soviet-made tanks that could not stand up to high-tech Western hardware, became miracle weapons when they started crushing

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In No. 15 this year *New Times* invited its readers to take part in the discussion on the army's role and place in society. In this issue, the Canadian political scientist, Ilya Gerol, shares his views

unarmed Shiites who make up to 60 percent of Iraq's population. Soviet-made helicopter gunships designed by the Lenin Prize winner Mil, proved a perfect weapon when they were used against Kurdish villages. The Iraqi troops were soon to discover that Mil gunships were perfectly suited to drop mustard gas canisters from, and mustard gas is by right known as a reliable tool of national salvation. The exodus of hundreds of thousands of Kurds from the country where their ancestors had lived for centuries will help, according to Iraq's deputy premier Aziz, to consolidate the Iraqi population in the name of restoring law and order in the country.

All this sounds painfully familiar. In a state were colonels, generals, marshals and generalissimos, if any, are allowed to meddle in politics and to work out philosophical strategies of national salvation through introduction of a state of emergency, actual defence is usually neglected. It is only such a state that can allow a German plane to make a smooth landing on the central square of its capital city nearly becoming a personage in yet another military parade or festive demonstration of the working class.

Drawing by Victor Kazachek

It is only the military thinkers who share Guderian's viewpoint that "tanks decide everything" (Guderian must have borrowed this maxim form Comrade Stalin who insisted that "cadres decided everything") who could be as stupid as to send columns of heavy tanks into the narrow mountain passes of Afghanistan, where those tanks remained as sad monuments to idiocy.

In 1981 the State Council of Poland, and actually the Polish army on instructions from the Polish United Workers' Party, introduced martial law in Poland, seizing factories, plants and coal mines in one sweeping attack and sending Solidarity leaders, liberal intellectuals and innocent dreamers about "socialism with a human face" behind bars.

As a result of that operation, Polish socialism did not lose a human face because it had never had one. However, law and order – in the interpretation of the military saviours of Poland – was immediately restored across the country. Majors came to run the coal mines and generals started lecturing factory directors about the intricacies of clearing payments and management: eyes right – here you've got clearing payments; eyes left – here you've got management. As for the political indoctrination department of the armed forces, it became intimate with writers and journalists explaining to them what the spiritual values of developed socialism were all about.

The only thing that was not achieved was the expected flourishing of the national economy and culture. The country found itself in an economic morass, from which Poland started to pull itself only after it changed the social system and sent the army where it belongs in a civilized state – back to barracks.

In Seoul, far away from the once fraternal family of once socialist countries, the former opposition leader, Kim Young-sam, who today is the second in command in the Republic of Korea, told me:

"For a long time we could not understand why our army was so weak as compared with our formidable adversaries in the North, despite our successful economic development. It was only after we democratized our system and withdrew soldiers from the political life altogether, that our army started improving in terms of quality and combat effectiveness. Today our army is a military force, not a motley collection of political riff-raff. Politics is the job of popularly elected politicians and the military's job is to defend the country. This is what is called democracy. It was difficult to understand but when we finally did understand it, we felt much more secure...".

In the Soviet Union where the military have traditionally played an important role, political and military reforms are inseparably connected and cannot be implemented one without the other. Complete aloofness of the army from politics is a major prerequisite for the democratic process which is painfully struggling its way through economic chaos, ethnic strife, social disintegration, fatigue and disillusionment. The army must be separated from politics more securely than the Church is separated from the state. No military deputy must be allowed to sit in parliaments or local Soviets. The vociferous MP Col. Alksnis must do what he is supposed to do: to command his subordinates and take care not to soil his uniform, both figuratively and literally. Generals must show off their medals during parades, not at political meetins or sessions. In civilized countries no one needs political advice from generals, moreover giving such advice may be punishable.

The army must become professional, which can only be done if the state and society do their best to provide the armed forces with best weapons, most effective training and optimal conditions of everyday life, thus ensuring its well-being. This is the only way to avoid losing wars. This is the only way for the power-hungry colonels to justify their presence by their preparedness to rebuff any external aggression. As for now, though, they would be wise to heed the advice: if they go to war against their own nation, they will lose anyway. If not at once, then after some time.

Ilya Gerol
OTTAWA

The author wishes to donate the fee for this article to the society Memorial.

Ministerial at a spa

The USSR and the United States are planning a Middle East peace conference which they will co-chair. But who's going to participate?

Galina Sidorova,
our special correspondent

The Secretary of State of the USA, James Baker, interrupted his third in the past two months trip in the Middle East to meet his Soviet counterpart in the spa of Kislovodsk, half the way between Moscow and Damascus. James Baker came to Kislovodsk after negotiations in Damascus and was due to head for Israel after his session with Alexander Bessmertnykh, the Soviet Foreign Minister, was over. The Soviet-US ministerial was devoted to one major topic – the convention of a Middle East peace conference and the invitation extended to the USSR to co-chair that conference.

Kislovodsk's spa climate lent a special atmosphere to the ministerial. Before he came to negotiate, James Baker went to see the mineral water springs, drank some narzan (the brandname of the Kislovodsk mineral water) and demonstrated his fitness as he ran up one of the hills watched by a crowd of excited holiday-makers. Baker's uphill escapade was nearly fatal for the Kislovodsk city bosses who had to screw up all their strength to keep pace with the jogging Texan.

Strangely, the time of the ministerial did not influence either the agenda or the course of negotiations in Kislovodsk. While tensions gripped Moscow as it waited for the results of the CPSU Central Committee plenum, in Kislovodsk its inhabitants could not wait to see James Baker and the diplomats were eager to get down to business to discuss Middle East problems. Besides, the Americans were radiating a surprising confidence that the Soviet President would finally overwhelm his opponents and seemed to pay little attention to the news from Moscow.

The first strong impression was the sight of Baker's bodyguards scurrying across the hotel lobby carrying jars of water (some bodyguards lived at the same hotel with Soviet journalists accredited at the ministerial). It turned out that after noon each day Kislovodsk stopped having fresh water running. Kislovodsk, where people flock to sip the curing mineral water, still has problems with the supply of ordinary water. The atmosphere of decay, the delapidated hotel with graffiti-covered lifts – all this made one wonder whether any country in the world could still take the USSR seriously.

The Americans', and to some extent the Arabs' and Israel's insistence on the Soviet co-chairing the contemplated peace conference suggested that those parties had good reasons to want to see the USSR at the peace talks. One reason may be our recent ideological clients' continued reliance on this country. All the coflicting sides want to somehow balance the American influence in the region. In their turn, the Americans understand that Middle Eastern peace may be too heavy a burden for the US to carry alone and reasonably do not want the Soviet Union to develop an inferiority complex that may later be a threat to international relations.

Bessmertnykh greets Baker in Kislovodsk

Photo by Eduard Pesov

I have an impression that Moscow's role in the Middle Eastern affairs has been reduced recently. Is that really so?

Some experts, says Alexander Bessmertnykh, recommended me to rush for the Middle East as soon as it became known that James Baker was going there. It is also a way to play this. It has its advantages, it allows you to be on

the site all the time. If it is really necessary, I am prepared to rush anywhere. But I do not like to show off in diplomacy: if Baker is there, we must be there too. He does a lot of travelling. I do also. I believe, the best way for the Soviet diplomacy in this particular case was to exercise restraint. The Americans were not acting isolatedly from us. We were jointly working on a number of problems. We also had contacts with Egypt, Syria, the PLO, and Israel. Now I am planning to visit the Middle East, but I will carry a different luggage, a clear-cut concept. Now I have a better notion of how far we can go, the scale of the manoeuvre we are to execute...

The international community has been trying to solve the Middle East puzzle for several decades already. Once, attempts were made to solve the Middle East crisis under the joint Soviet-American aegis. But at the 1973 conference in Geneva each superpower worked with "its own" clients.

Today the situation is different. I believe, the reason for it is that the conflict has lost its ideological charge. Anyway, the co-chairmen are providing an example.

I asked the Soviet Foreign Minister: will there be any division of efforts between the superpowers? What will be the American responsibility and what will be ours?

Alexander Bessmertnykh. Them and us are going to work with all the participants. Our objective as co-chairmen is not to impose our vision and concepts on the sides involved, but to help them meet at the negotiating table and start seeking agreement together. Them and us believe that interests of all sides, the Palestinians included, must be taken into account. Them and us believe that the Middle East peace process must incorporate a peace conference and bilateral talks. Them and us agree that UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 are the basis for the peace conference. We still have to think over some minor details. But in general we have quite a good foundation for cooperation.

– How do you see the initial stage of the conference?

A.B. I believe, first all the sides will convene with the co-chairmen and will speak on their approaches to the problems on the conference agenda. Then they will form working groups discussing bilateral and global problems. One of the main problems we have to resolve is the Palestinian problem. First we must reach an intermediary and then, the final solution of the Palestinian problem.

Another scenario is also possible. International by definition, the conference in which the USSR, the USA and, probably, the Europeans will participate, will initially involve Israel and the Palestinians: there could be bilateral negotiations between them, as well as between Israel and Arab states. The final stage will be an international conference approving the settlement and solving the problems which are beyond the bilateral confines. We still have to think about the best way to follow. Today it is important that we put the train on the rails and start running along...

– Does Israel still insist that the Soviet Union restore diplomatic relations with it, if Moscow is to co-chair the conference?

A.B. Israel would love to see the relations with the USSR restored. But our position is that we are not going to accept any preliminary conditions for our co-chairmanship. We co-chaired the 1973 Middle East Conference together with the Americans. At that time we did not have any consular, let alone diplomatic, relations with Israel. Second. We are approaching normalization of relations with Israel. As soon as we are in the process of a Middle East settlement, and as soon as Israel becomes a part of such a process, we will not have any objections to the restoration of relations with that country. Israel's relative restraint during the Persian Gulf crisis attests to the fact that that country's policies are becoming more reasonable and realistic. I would say that the problem of our co-chairing the peace conference comes later than the problem of restoring relations with Israel.

– Does this mean that relations with Israel will be restored?

A.B. We shall see. I may have to need more contacts with the Israeli leaders. I believe, the situation will clear up soon...

Both the Soviet Foreign Minister and the US Secretary of State understand what burden they will have to carry: their task is to bring a whole group of states with conflicting interests to the negotiating table. Each side has its own fears and suspicions. Everybody is shouting. Nobody is listening. Everybody believes only in his own stance. Even the composition of the proposed conference is a problem. Most probably, the conference will be attended by major bordering-on-Israel Arab states, Israel itself and the co-chairing superpowers. The probability that European countries and United Nations representatives will participate in the peace conference evokes differing opinions. The Arab countries have different positions on the conditions of their participation. The juridical foundation of the conference and the form of Palestinian participation remain unclear. How can all these factors be brought together? Not surprisingly so, that few experts volunteer to predict when the conference will begin its work.

"The conflict in the Middle East is one of the oldest ones", the Soviet Foreign Minister said. "The sides' positions have become axiomatic. And it is very difficult to cancel an axiom. The stereotypes are as heavy as lead..."

Alexander Bessmertnykh said much from the past experience would be logical, but cannot be implemented in practice. The task for today is to bring the sides' positions down to the ground.

The Americans have already started the progress with minimal bids so that not to fix the sides' positions and to start pushing the sides closer to each other. The American idea is to break the psychological barrier between Israel and the Arabs. Baker even tried to introduce new vocabulary, so that the old words should not rake the old wounds.

However, as an American colleague said, the farther form the Middle East, the brighter the settlement prospects look.

Baker arrived at Kislovodsk in a gloomy mood. Journalists who accompanied him in his Middle East tour said sometimes Baker had been on the verge of dropping the whole thing and returning to Washington.

I put a question to the Secretary of State: Don't you feel that the co-chairing superpowers are more interested in the conference to begin than its participants?

James Baker. I do not have such an impression. As I have said more than once, nobody can impose peace on the Middle East. Whichever countries co-chaired the conference, it will not be a success, it will not even begin unless the participants in the conflict feel an urge for peace. I have an impression that such an urge is there. The decisions that will have to be taken will be very difficult and tough ones. That is why they have not been taken for so many years. But if we do not display insistence, they may never be taken. I am deeply convinced it's the best chance to take the right decisions...

Indications are that Baker is not going to surrender. The Americans seem determined to show that they can win peace in the Middle East as successfully as they have won the war.

What about us? Shall we be pushing the train ahead or running along?

Someone may say that until we have fixed water supply in Kislovodsk, we should not meddle in world politics. Naturally, international respect for a nation is largely based on that nation's standards of living. But living standards are not the only factor. Respect for a nation also depends on how willingly and effectively that nation participates in international affairs and on how greatly it contributes to the world civilization.

The current situation in the Middle East evokes associations with the Soviet Union's domestic conflicts, like the one in Nagorny Karabakh. Our inter-ethnic conflicts have also acquired the force and character of axioms. Perhaps the experience of Middle East settlement will help solve conflicts inside the Soviet Union.

KISLOVODSK–MOSCOW

Angst in Transvaal

Frederik de Klerk's reforms may ruin the South African state, the Afrikaners warn

Eugene Terreblanche: We are supported across the White heartland *Photo from Paris Match*

Every morning hundreds of tons of TNT are handed out from the storehouses of South Africa's mines. It is practically impossible to control the spending of the dynamite. As he goes home from a workshift, almost any worker can take a couple of dynamite slabs with him: white employees cannot be searched in here. Recently the Johannesburg police seized a cache of dynamite slabs stolen from the mines as well as an arsenal of firearms belonging to the organization Afrikaner Resistance Movement. Does this mean that South Africa's white minority are getting ready for a civil war?

President Frederik de Klerk has not tried to conceal anything. On the contraty, he has always spoken about the intention to build "a new South Africa" free of apartheid. However, the white South Africans, a five-million tribe living amidst 26 million blacks, 4 million Indians and half-breeds, refused to lend an ear. Suddenly heavens came crushing on their heads – the ANC leader, Nelson Mandela was out of prison and the government started negotiations with "the black terrorists." For the Afrikaners this was a shock of course. The liberals said they were staggered and excited by de Klerk's courage. The supporters of apartheid were indignant and highly hostile. They realized that the days of apartheid were counted and sooner or later they would have to share power with or to give up power to the black majority. How will it happen? The rapidly changing situation in South Africa has landed South African whites in a temporal nothingness – the old idols have been demolished and new ones are threatening chaos and even greater destruction.

The problem is that the "white tribe" is highly diversified. The fortress of apartheid seemed monolythic only at first sight: actually, first cracks in it appeared a long time ago. The 2-million-strong Anglophone community makes up the nucleus of the Liberal Party and the group Verligte which opposes apartheid. They accepted Frederik de Klerk's perestroika, although not without some reservations. Their symbol is Harry Oppenheimer, owner of South African gold mines and founder of the mammoth Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa. Oppenheimer believes the South African economy will not survive if the blacks are left out in the cold. Businessmen have little time to think about races and racial conflicts. Liberals want social democracy which could eliminate the differences between the rich and the poor, not the whites and the blacks.

In their opinion, the only way out of the crisis is to form a government trusted and supported by the majority of the country's population; otherwise, the liberals insist, South Africa will really turn to a powder keg. On the other hand, the democratically-minded whites are seriously alarmed by interethnic tensions and violence inside the black community which destabilize the situation in the country. Currently, much hope is pinned on the dialogue beginning between the two rivalling black organizations: Inkatha and the African National Congress.

The right-wing forces, the Verkrampft (diehards), as they are known in South Africa, are of a different opinion. "The Anglophones can afford to be liberal," the Afrikaners gloomily say. "They've got British passports in their left pockets. And we have nowhere to retreat." The Boers are right in saying this. Their ancestors – Dutchmen and Huguenots who fled France after Edit de Nantes was abolished – became the first to colonize the Cape province. They explored Transvaal and the Orange Free State carrying guns, picks and the Holy Bible, they built the first forts there. The Afrikaners have nowhere to return to, they are white Africans.

Survival has always been the Boers' chief concern. The ideologues of apartheid spent years to educate the white community in the spirit of the besieged fortress mentality. Not surprisingly, the Akrikaners vastly favour the idea of a Boer staste – Boerestaat. The leader of the Boer Staat Partei (the Boer State Party), Robert von Tonder, says that South Africa is an unviable conglomerate, the home of fifteen races, whites and blacks. If they are forced to live together any longer, there will be an upsurge of nationalism, just like in the Soviet Union. We demand that the Boer state be restored. It will serve as a haven for the whites, von Tonder says. The feelings of the Afrikaners are understandable: they feel a bitter nostalgia for Transvaal, the country annexed by Britain during the 1900 war.

Von Tonder is supported by the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (ARM) headed by Eugene Terreblanche. Terreblanche, a majestic Boer with a silver beard, does not like to speak English. "I am at home here. If you want to talk, bring along a cultured man who speaks Afrikaans," he scolds journalists. The ARM claims to be supported throughout South Africa's white heartland. People living in the towns of Transvaal bushland are convinced that

Frederik de Klerk is a traitor and that the blacks would shoot every white if they ever come to power. Soon the number of separatists will be known exactly – printshops are already printing IDs carrying the emblem of the Boer State: an eagle, a lion, a pioneer and a wagon under the motto, "Unity is power."

What is the Boers' idea of their state? Von Tonder believes South Africa will become a confederation of several white and black states. Besides Transvaal and the Orange Free State, the Boer State will also include the Vryheid area annexed by Natal after the Boers' defeat. Pretoria and Johannesburg will remain within the Boer State. Although everything is mixed in South Africa like in an omelette, most Afrikaners live on their land. The rest of the whites will have to move there. A familiar situation, isn't it? Everybody is getting to a separate flat. The process is justified in South Africa by same arguments as in the USSR: interethnic relations will improve. The blacks will see the Boers as friends, not oppressors. The Zulus will be liberated from the British influence and will prosper. The Boers have already come up with their own flag: the red, blue and white colours of the Dutch banner plus a green stripe symbolizing the fertility of Transvaal. The self-defence units of the Boer State are almost completely formed already.

Tensions in South African society started mounting after the publication in March of this year of The White Paper on the agrarian reform in the country. The de Klerk government's programme stipulates lifting of racial restrictions on owning land. Considering the fact that 87 percent of South African land belongs to the whites, the outbreak of separatism in the community does not seem surprising. The leader of the Conservative Party, Treurnicht, declared in the parliament that the administration was not leaving the whites any choice but to start fighting for survival. The right-wing forces demanded dissolution of the parliament, new elections and a referendum on the future of South Africa. Their strategy is transparent. Today the Nationalist Party controls 93 out of the 166 seats in the parliament. Some 39 seats belong to the conservatives, and other right-wing parties are also strong in the parliament. Opinion polls conducted in rural areas indicate a sharp drop of the ruling party's popularity. So far the centre has been able to keep power, but separatist ideas are spreading in society. Isn't de Klerk playing Russian roulette? We will soon know. So far, the forecasts have not been optimistic. The diehards are still strong in South Africa.

Midhat Zaripov

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How to turn vice into virtue

The last Portuguese colony has realized the need for this

Wars start and end, states and empires perish, years and ages pass, and Macau – that tiny spot on the world map remains a birth mark on the body of the great country – China. A lot of such spots – big and small – have disappeared in the past few years. And Macau is still there. However, in 1999, according to a Sino-Portuguese statement, Macau will be transferred to the sovereignty of China. But already now few people believe that cardinal changes are possible there.

The Asian Las Vegas

For over 400 years Macau has been considered a Portuguese colony. And throughout all this time the Portuguese have been worried more about typhoons, than about outbreaks of popular discontent. A foreigner visiting Macau won't see there slogans like "Down with the Portuguese colonialism." Neither will he observe any special euphoria about the coming return of Macau "home," though it has been Chinese soil from time immemorial. Is it another Asian paradox? Possible.

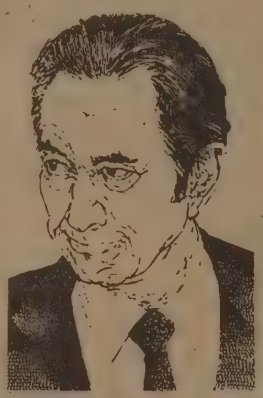
Macau or Aomen (which in English means "wharf") is a territory a mere 17.5 sq km large with a population of half a million people. These are mostly immigrants of about ten different nationalities living in the mouth of the Xijiang River, practically on an island 4 km long and 2 km wide. Since there's no airport there, numerous tourists (over 5 million people visit Macau every year) reach the island by sea via Hong Kong. But local residents claim that though "the land is very small, it takes a long time to cross it."

While the neighbouring Hong Kong is a city of banks, major deals and business operations, Macau is an island of temples, gold smuggling, gambling and prostitution.

All kinds of smuggling flourish in Macau. A few years ago they even managed to steal the submerged telephone cable which connected Hong Kong with Macau. But this is all chicken feed compared to the big game in gold business, which brings incredible profits.

Macau is the only place in the world where free import of gold is allowed, since Portugal is not a member of the International Monetary Fund and therefore does not obey any of its rules and orders.

All the imported gold, and that is hundreds and thousands of tons of the precious metal, is brought to the basement of the old Seng Heng Bank – the largest gold syndicate in the world. Up to this moment everything is quite legal. Smuggling begins later. At the Seng Heng Bank the gold is melted into bars eight ounces each. Then all this "small change" is taken to Hong Kong, and from there – by a secret route – to purchasers in Asia, Latin America and Europe. Gold is on sale in Macau itself too. Following an ancient tradition, local residents and tourists like to buy gold pieces as good luck charms. It is believed that in little shops alone up to 40 thousand kilograms of gold are sold every year.



Stanley Ho, the present "king of Macau"

Macau is also famous for its gambling houses, which account for up to 40 percent of the colony's revenue. It's not for nothing that Macau is called "Asian Las Vegas." Many of its residents in some way or another work for the roulette and depend on it. And there are a great many roulettes in Macau, as well as people watching them in anticipation. But the fashion is set by permanent, recognized gamblers, known all around the island and far beyond it.

As for true architects of the "gambling hell," they are entirely different people, those who were building Macau's well-being on gambling and gold business. This construction was promoted by a favourable economic situation: open economy, free enterprise, moderate taxes, and no customs duties, budget deficit or foreign debts. Enterprising businessmen plus the administration's liberal economic policy have worked miracles in Macau.

The kings of Macau

The roulette wheel began turning at full speed in Macau some 50 years ago. Legend has it that a certain Chinese by the name of Tak Shecin in search of luck and money came to a remote village of Samsheng in the south of China. Poor but enterprising, he had a perfect knowledge of the secrets of Chinese games of chance – majiang and fatang, and opened a night club there. The little casino was gradually growing, and so was Tak's income. But Japan's aggression against China in 1937 upset all plans of the lucky businessman. What was there to do? Finally, he decided to flee and soon found himself in Macau. He was accompanied by his bodyguard Fu Tak-yam. At one of the auctions the stranger from Samsheng purchased from the Portuguese the right to concession for a sum which at that time seemed astronomical – a hundred million dollars.

It was then that the big game began. Wealthy Chinese noblemen fleeing from the Japanese were arriving from Shanghai and Guangzhou. The bulk of the treasures belonging to some of them was quickly pumped to Tak Shecin's casino. Years passed. The new "king of gambling" invested money into the construction of the 16-storey-high Grand Hotel – the first skyscraper in Macau. But he was not destined to see his creation. Death cut short his far-reaching plans. Tak was replaced in the big game by his "falteful" servant Fu Tak-yam. Fu acted on a greater scale than his late master. "Mister Fu" bought up real estate, a wharf, a shipping company which connects Hong Kong and Macau, built luxurious hotels and kept opening gambling houses. Fu's vanity was boundless – he raised his own flag, which was flying for many years next to the Portuguese flag. At the end of the 1940s gangsters kidnapped his son and demanded 5 thousand pounds for him. But Fu cared for money

more than for his son's life. "Let one of them die, but I have another dozen," was his resolute reply to the gangsters' ultimatum.

And nevertheless, the former bodyguard made some mistake in his game. In 1962 he had to sell the Macau gambling house to Stanley Ho, a businessman from Hong Kong.

"Keep up the good work, Stanley!"

Since then, for the past 30 years Macau has actually belonged to Stanley Ho. During these years the 69-year-old "King of Macau" has multiplied his initial fortune many times over. Today this is an enormous empire. Its tourist syndicate STDM alone owns 5 gambling houses, 5 hotels, banks, the local television and travelling agency in Macau. Twenty percent of the enclave's population are employed there. Apart from that, together with other enterprisers the syndicate controls an entire fleet of hydrofoils and ferryboats. "There is not a single key branch in the colony in which Stanley wouldn't take a hand," said a foreign banker. "I can't imagine any other spot on our planet, where one firm would play such a domineering role in the country's economy."

In his business strategy Stanley Ho is guided by his favorite aphorism: "I can't afford to put all the eggs into one basket". Therefore, alongside strengthening the might of STDM he became the head of several flourishing industrial companies. In 1987 he bought the "Semi-Tech" firm manufacturing computers. A year later under the banner of "Semi-Tech" Ho bought a whole network of American retail trade companies. He led an exhausting and expensive struggle which proved successful, to purchase the controlling interest of the "Singer" giant clothes factory. And still he was not satisfied. In 1990 Stanley became a co-owner of companies manufacturing gramophone records, telephones, videotape recorders, electronic toys, etc.

Tall and immaculately dressed, Stanley always tries to look respectable. Half Chinese and half Portuguese, he is the honorable consul of Macau in Bolivia and Honduras and holds a PHD. Stanley has also received numerous awards from the governments of a number of countries for his extraordinary generosity in charity and patronage of art.

Gambling revenues make up 40 percent of Macau's budget

Photo from the magazine National Geographic (USA)

In the past 30 years the "King of Macau's fortune" has grown fantastically, but at the same time, due to his enterprise, the well-being of the colony's residents has also grown. Taxes received from his STDM syndicate alone make up almost 50 percent of the annual revenue of Macau's administration. The per capita GNP exceeded 6 thousand dollars a year (one of the highest in the East), and in the economic growth rate – almost 12 percent – Macau leads the most dynamically developing nations in Asia. And another point, there are 180 telephone lines per every thousand people there and everywhere there are fax machines. In the past four years consumer goods prices in Macau have gone up only 17 percent a very modest rate of inflation.

In March 1990 Stanley Ho went to Beijing to find out about Macau's future. There he was received by the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, Jiang Zemin. After the visit Ho told newsmen that his activity had met with complete understanding of the Chinese leadership. The Chinese Communists openly said to the "King of Macau": "Keep up the good work, Stanley!".

On the eve of 1990

What awaits Macau after 1999? The Chinese-Portuguese joint statement of 1985 envisages the preservation on this territory of the present social and economic system till the middle of the next century and allows the presence of the Portuguese, primarily in the sphere of the language and culture. But following the tragic events in Tiananmen square in 1989 fears have been growing in Macau as to whether Beijing would fulfill its commitment to grant the colony a considerable economic and political autonomy within the framework of Deng Xioping's famous formula – "one country, two systems".

And still residents of Macau feel safer than residents of Hong Kong. Perhaps because by 1999 Portugal will have provided most of the people in Macau with the passports of the European Community, thereby guaranting their security. Many also believe that China will not use force in Macau, since it would immediately affect Hong Kong's trust in China. Any problems in these two important spots in South-East Asia could prevent Peking from achieving its main goal, that of annexing Taiwan.

But on the threshold of 1999 Macau has yet to solve enormous administrative problems. Unlike Hong Kong, it has no high-ranking administrators and lawyers among ethnic Chinese, who could rule Macau under the aegis of Beijing after 1999. Lisbon was always against electing local Chinese and emigres to the colony's government bodies, though they make up 98 percent of the island's population. At present the governing posts are distributed among 2 thousand Portuguese and 8 thousand Euro-Asians, closely connected with the Portuguese administration. Many Europeans are expected to leave Macau by the end of this century, thereby leaving vacancies in the administration. Of course, Beijing can bring its own administrators to the island, but this will hardly build up trust in it on the part of local residents and, what's most important, on the part of the West.

As for politics, in the past 25 years the "sleeping dragons" has changed a great deal. The typhoon of the "cultural revolu-

tion" in China touched Macau too. The "Red Guards" from the continent nearly established the power of the "Great Helmsman" in Macau. A bloodshed began when the "Red Guards" went to storm the Governor's Palace. But the typhoon stopped as abruptly as it began: Beijing called a retreat and the "Red Guards" stopped their orgy. In the meantime, Lisbon also took steps towards reconciliation: official appologies were made for the Chinese blood shed in Macau. Shortly after that a bilateral agreement was signed, according to which Macau remained a Portuguese colony. For their part, the Portuguese had to admit that the enclave could not survive without Beijing.

Since then Beijing has influenced the territory considerably. For many years the power in Macau's Legislative Assembly has been shared by local pro-Beijing leaders and the Euro-Asian-Portuguese group. According to the order of elections they established, the Portuguese remained in the majority, at the same time admitting Beijing's influence. This comfortable life ended in 1984.

In the 1984 election a Liberal activist-populist of Chinese origin Alexander Ho received a seat on the Legislative Assembly, and his group strengthened its positions at the next parliamentary election in the fall of 1988. "The old forces want to prosper, they don't care about the people. They hinder Macau's advancement," claims Alexander Ho. "They never put forward any new ideas and always consult Beijing."

At first the Liberal forces' victory frightened Beijing. But perhaps now it sees some advantages for itself in their activity, especially if it will help soften the painful transfer of the colony under China's sovereignty. More over, since even Alexander Ho, a 43-year old Catholic, has repeatedly said that "Macau must coexist with Beijing".

It is inevitable that feelings of panic in Macau will interchange with confidence in the future in connection with developments in China. Nevertheless, the coming decade is likely to become a period of that territory's dynamic development. And this means that stability and prospering of Macau are guaranteed for many years to come.

Alexander Chudodeyev

Those election promises

Who will win over half a billion voters?

The parliamentary election, the tenth since independence, will be held in India late in May. The world's largest turnout is expected. Over 521 million people have been entered in voters lists. Perhaps it will also be the most expensive election. The government, parties and sponsors, mainly private businessmen, are going to spend more than 15 billion rupees.

In a parliamentary democracy the general election, apart from voting, has only one stage – the election campaign. India has two pre-election stages. At the first stage, which determines the results of voting to a large extent, various alliances are concluded. Such alliances have already been formed. The main contestants are the Indian National Congress (I), which is to be supported by several regional parties, the National Front, the nucleus of which is the Janata Dal, in alliance with left parties, and the Bharatiya Janata Party, which, as distinct from the previous general election, does not intend to form alliances with other national parties.

The main hopes of the INC(I)

The Indian National Congress (I) pins its main hopes on the north, first of all the Hindu belt consisting of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and the union territory of Delhi. They are represented by 221 deputies in the 545-seat lower chamber of the Indian parliament. The INC(I) hopes for much better results than in the previous election. The voters of the north said then a firm "no" to the Congress. The party's greater optimism is based mainly on the mass response to the first pre-election visits of its chairman Rajiv Gandhi to that region.

In the past, the former prime minister went on an election tour in an air-conditioned car and with a retinue consisting of party officials, bodyguards and policemen. At a recent meeting with foreign journalists in Delhi Rajiv Gandhi said that the loss of close communication with the people had been his serious mistake and that he drew a lesson from it. In his public addresses Rajiv Gandhi no longer attacks political leaders contesting with him. He simply prefers not to mention them in general.

The main slogan of the party's election manifesto is stability. The Congress governments have been in office for 40 years. They were led by four prime ministers. The non-Congress cabinets have been in power for four years only. Four prime ministers were replaced during this time. In the opinion of Congress members the government crises of the last 15 months have greatly destabilized the internal political situation and led to a sharp growth of prices and inflation and a general worsening of the people's condition.

In the event of its victory the INC(I) promises "to heal the socio-economic wounds" inflicted by the previous governments within a clearly defined term: from 100 to 1,000 days. Its leaders are convinced that the call for stability will meet with a broad response. Not without reason they also link their hopes for a victory with an arithmetic factor.

India has a majoritarian election system. The election in a constituency goes to the candidate who polls the largest vote. During the entire history of parliamentary elections the Congress has never gained 50 percent of the vote. But it has invariably come to power with the exception of two cases – in 1977 and 1989, when it was countered virtually by a united front of opposition parties. There is even a special term in the local political parlance – "the index of opposition unity". In the previous parliamentary election it was 77 percent. The INC(I) polled 39.5 percent of the vote – more than any other simple party. Nevertheless, it lost because in the majority of constituences the Congress candidate was countered by a single candidate of the opposition. This time the political opponents of the INC(I) were unable to build an anti-Congress front. The split in their ranks promises additional advantages for the INC(I).

An attractive slogan

For Vishwanath Pratap Singh, leader of the Janata Dal, the forthcoming election is a time to reap the harvest the seeds of which were sown when he was prime minister of India. His cabinet adopted a decision on the reservation of 27 percent of jobs in the

Election campaign posters

TASS photo

country's public sector for "other backward castes" (22 percent of jobs for the "registered" castes and tribes have long since been reserved constitutionally). This decision provoked a government crisis which ended in Singh's resignation from the post of prime minister last November.

In the recent time perhaps no other problem has divided the society so sharply and irrevocably. For some people V.P. Singh is a messiah of the backward sections of the Indian population. In the eyes of others he is a leader who almost revives the division of the Indian society into castes. The Janata Dal wields influence in the predominantly poor eastern states of India, first of all in Bihar and Orissa, where it heads the local governments. The party hopes to strengthen its positions in the south and in the Moslem community thanks to its stand in defence of national and religious minorities. It also hopes to derive benefits from its cooperation with left parties which have a solid base in West Bengal and Kerala and partly in Bihar.

Defence of the rights of the unfortunate, restoration of social justice is certainly an attractive slogan. After V.P. Singh had promised to increase the reservation quota in the public sector for women and the poor from the upper castes it turned out that the total made up about 60 percent of the population. It is interesting whether V.P. Singh, who is called "Mr Sixty Percent" here, will be able to win the votes of these people.

Opinion polls show that of the 3.743 castes and tribes to which the reservation measures apply the majority does not even know about the benefits of their practical realization for them. Owing to the weakness of the Janata Dal's local infrastructure it is not easy to make the party's election slogans known to the voters. Incidentally, V.P. Singh himself believes that the process of transformation of the society or, as he says, "crystallization of social forces," has only started.

One more rival of the INC(I)

The Bharatiya Janata Party, which holds dominant positions on the right flank of local politics, can also become a rival of the INC(I). In an interview to *New Times* its leader L.K Advani explained his party's claim to power in this way: "For over four decades one party – the INC(I) – has dominated in Indian democracy, and all its main opponents have been kept in the shadow. Even when the voters rejected Indira Gandhi in the 1977 election and Rajiv Gandhi in 1989, they did not say 'yes' to other parties. They simply rejected the Congress. In this sense the forthcoming parliamentary election will differ from all the previous ones. For the first time the Congress will face a real alternative in the Bharatiya Janata Party. Our party, which has put forward its candidates in more than 450 constituences, represents a dynamic all-Indian force prepared to impart a positive trend to national development. It is the voice of the resurging nationalist movement which can pull India out the present crisis."

The BJP leaders hope to win the election with the help of the Hindutva movement. The BJP needs power to build "a state of genuine Hindus" (Hindu Rashtra) in which the orthodox Hindux of upper castes would be the masters and the heterodox, first of all Moslems, national minorities and Hindus – members of lower castes, especially the untouchables, would be "second-rate citizens."

True, Hindu Rashtra is not even mentioned in the pre-election statements of BJP leaders. Moreover, the BJP has directed its state branches to take a softer posture on the Hindutva issue and not to associate themselves with bellicose Hindu religious organizations. This was done for fear of possible sanctions on the part of the chief election commission against the BJP, because the Indian Constitution forbids the use of religion for political purposes.

Some time ago the commission nearly deprived the BJP of its electoral symbol – lotus – for using it during L.K.Advani's visit to the city of Ayodhya. Hindus assert that Ram, one of the most respected gods, was born there and that prior to 1528 a Hindu temple stood in that place. The temple was allegedly destroyed by the Mogul leader Babur and a mosque was erected on its site.

The Moslem community of India vehemently disputes this claim and, the more so, rejects the plans of the Vishva Hindu Parishad and other Hindu religious organizations to pull down the mosque and erect a Ram temple on its site, while the BJP supports this plan. "Every nation has its culture and historical legacy," L.K. Advani said. "In India it is Hinduism. The building of a Ram temple will restore the Hindu pride."

The defence of "the insulted dignity of Ram" is the main trump card in the BJP's election strategy. It promises the people roti (bread) and insaaf (justice).

The election manifestos of all political parties contain lengthy sections devoted to the socio-economic measures planned by them. But it is hardly necessary to analyze them, at least because "most manifestos are forgotten the day the elections are over," to use the words of the noted publicist Prem Shankar Jha.

The latest opinion poll shows that 57 percent of respondents regard inflation as the country's main problem. Unemployment comes second (18 percent). Stability was mentioned by 6 percent of respondents, and only 3 percent think that the main problem is the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Sergei Irodov,
our own correspondent
DELHI

The World Paper

The wave of privatization

Public headaches – private cures

Going back 50 years or so in economic and political time the code word in much intense discussion was nationalization – or socialization. Large, powerful and often monopolistic enterprises were prominent on the industrial scene. Their workers and consumers were, even in the most reputable discourse, presumed to be a little or a lot at their mercy. How plausible that the state should step in, take over and operate in the interest of all its citizens.

Or perhaps the enterprises were insufficiently powerful; the public was penalized by their weakness, threatened by their prospective failure. Again the remedy: nationalization.

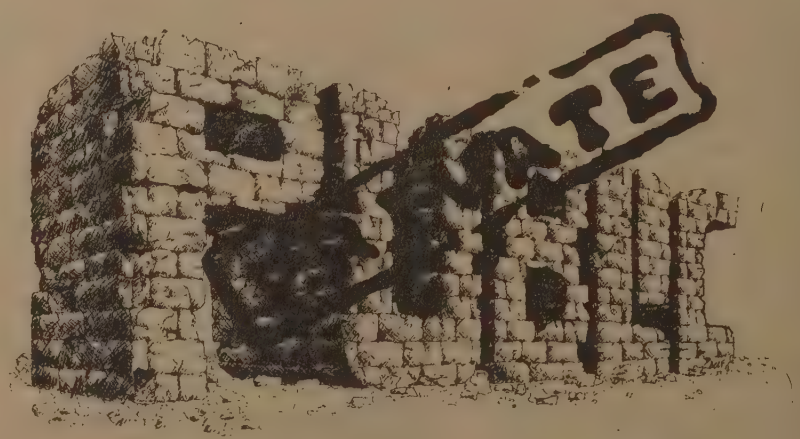
Any such discussion today would have a marked flavor of antiquity, the economic and political equivalent, more or less, of the resurrection of the Titanic or the re-creation in New York's Central Park of the caves and paintings of Lascaux. All mention is now of privatization, most dramatically in Central Europe and the Soviet Union but also in the English speaking countries and as a basic component of effective public policy in Latin America and elsewhere. Economic debate is not over the policy but over the acceptable design for bringing about private ownership and operation.

It is a discussion, I suggest, that should be approached with a certain measure of mental reservation, extending, on occasion, to extreme skepticism. There is no overriding rule as to privatization by which anyone or any country should be guided. There is no substitute for careful case-by-case thought, painful as that may be.

In Europe and Japan, visiting Americans ride with pleasure on publicly owned or largely publicly owned railroad systems. Government ownership and operation of this by no means unimportant industry has been an economic and social success. In the United States we do not widely use railroads, for here private rail ownership was extensively a failure. The passenger trains and quite a few of the freight trains that do still serve are operated by the government. This is done with modest competence; the alternative would be no passenger service at all and a large part of the industrial eastern US left with no cargo trains.

In most modern industrial countries, electricity is provided by publicly owned companies, as are other utility services in Switzerland, a land identified in all popular attitudes with committed capitalism and free enterprise and where I have lived part of my life, I bank in an excellent publicly owned bank, ride a publicly owned railroad and rejoice in seeing cities where everyone is entitled by public action to more than acceptable shelter.

Elsewhere, there is indication that if a corporation is large enough, it does not greatly matter who is the ultimate owner of its shares. It can be owned by the government or, with little difference, by scattered and anonymous investors. What matters is that the management of the enterprise have full right of decision and be fully accountable for performance; that it be broadly rewarded for good performance



and suffer the consequences of incompetence. This, in turn, is to say that it should be generally subject to the test of the market, have the rewards from doing well and the penalties from lousing things up.

The disaster of public ownership in much of Latin America, as also in the case of older industry in Europe and elsewhere, is that performance is irrelevant or largely so. The firm is kept in operation as a lifeboat and gravy train for those employed there. The service rendered or the product manufactured is poor and sometimes redundant; the cost can be large and on occasion horrific. Privatization here has much to be said for it; it is also, in a good many cases, a useful cover for simply shutting down the business.

I have been talking of large enterprises – the big corporations. As the Russians, the Central Europeans and the Chinese have discovered, the case for the privatization of small enterprises, especially those rendering services or producing diverse consumer goods, is very great, perhaps nearly total. It was here, above all, that socialism did not work.

None of this, however, is to minimize the problems in the transition back to private enterprise. That is proving far more difficult than some of its advocates ever imagined. Intelligent gradualism can have much to commend it.

What emerges as a conclusion? I venture to think the meaning is clear. This is not a matter by which we can be guided by any universal rule, by ideology. We cannot conclude that public ownership is always good or bad. Equally, there is no general case for or against privatization. There is a need for careful consideration in each particular case or in the particular kind or class of economic enterprise. Thought, not general rules, must be brought to bear on the issue of privatization.

As I indicated at the outset, case-by-case consideration is demanding, even painful. Far easier is the oratory laying down broad, if sadly implausible, principles. Some have spoken of a broad, if sadly implausible, principles. Some have spoken of a broad, transforming move to private enterprise. I am hopeful and indeed optimistic enough to believe that it instead will be a thoughtful adjustment to particular circumstance.

John Kenneth Galbraith
in Cambridge, USA

Power of the profit motive

The number of privatized firms around the world

ARGENTINA: 13
BANGLADESH: 5
BRAZIL: 52
CANADA: 23
CHILE: 37
GERMANY: 6
ITALY:33
JAPAN: 5
KOREA: 7
MEXICO: 10
NEW ZEALAND: 4
NIGER:12
*PHILIPPINES: 58**
POLAND: 5
SENEGAL: 4
SINGAPORE: 12
SPAIN: 30
SWEDEN: 2
THAILAND: 2
UGANDA: 1
UK: 43
US: 3

List includes privatizations by completed public offerings, worker/management buyouts and direct private sales.

*Includes full and partial privatizations.

SOURCE: LIPTON AND SACHS, BROOKINGS PAPERS ON ECONOMIC ACTIVITY (1990)

Chile's path to privatization offers lessons worth noting

Privatization is bounding over ideological barriers in Latin America. Considered a patrimony of the right just a few years ago, today the left is also embracing it. Clearly, the examples of Felipe Gonzalez's Spain and François Mitterrand's France have inspired the more flexible minds in Latin America's left.

In the private sector, privatization has renewed investor confidence in economies that not too long ago seemed destined for strong state control.

In the 1980s, Mexico took the lead in privatization from Chile, which in the 1970s was the first country in Latin America to implement nationwide privatization schemes.

By 1990, the two main Mexican airlines, Aeromexico and Mexicana de Aviación, had been auctioned, as well as the telephone company, Telmex. Eighteen banks, those that were originally nationalized in 1982, are waiting their turn to be auctioned. While the sale of Telmex yielded a reported US$8 billion for the Mexican government, the banks are expected to net an extra $14 billion.

Argentina has also begun its privatization process. In November 1990, foreign investors purchased the national telephone company for about $5 billion. The government then went on to sell the national airline, Aerolineas Argentinas. Brazil, Venezuela and many smaller countries in the region are also in the initial stages of their own privatization processes.

Many long-held tenets of state enterprise have gone up in smoke in this process. Only a few years ago, for example, it would have been unthinkable to privatize state airlines, which have long been symbols of national pride. However, Argentina and Brazil (and Chile earlier) swallowed nationalist sentiment and privatized their airlines.

Privatization has not just been the result of ideology, as many said of the 1970s Chilean process. It stems from outright necessity. In Argentina, privatization is an urgent, practically motivated task. The Argentine public sector simply does not have the resources necessary to maintain normal operations in many state companies.

Chile's road to privatization provides useful lessons for Latin American and other countries where significant private markets already exist. In Chile, the military government that took power in September 1973 decided to transfer most of the assets that had come under state control in the previous Allende administration to the private sector.

The value of assets the government reaped through sales (mostly between 1974 and 1978) was about $1.2 billion. By 1980, only 43 public enterprises remained and the government's share in GDP had declined from about 40 percent in 1973 to a still considerable 24 percent in 1981; key public firms had remained in state hands – primarily those in the communications, mining and utility sectors. Although this may initially sound like a success story, there are several points worth noting in Chile's first privatization round:

Timing of the sales was inappropriate; most privatizations were carried out in 1975, as Chile faced its worst depression since the 1930s.

Newly privatized firms started with a high debt-equity ratio. When interest rates rose and the 1982–83 depression hit the economy, many firms went bankrupt.

Little care was taken to disseminate property widely. Sales resulted in the concentration of property in the hands of relatively few groups which had access to foreign credit.

The prices paid for some companies caused considera-

ble controversy. Many analysts have claimed that public assets were sold too cheaply, damaging public finances.

Chile launched a second round of privatization in 1985. As a result of the failure of financial institutions in the 1982–83 depression, many previously privatized entities were again in public hands, including two of the nation's largest banks and the biggest pension funds. A menu of new methods was used to privatize these companies. This time, the procedure and timing for the process was considerably improved.

In other developments, the government also privatized many state firms that remained in its hands after the first round to simply reduce state holdings. Several means were used to privatize these companies: private pension funds were allowed to purchase limited quantities of shares through the stock market (institutional capitalism); workers were given important incentives to become stockholders in newly privatized firms, such as access to their severance funds to pay for the shares (labor capitalism); and individual investors bought shares through the stock market or participated in the bidding processes (traditional capitalism).

Some concerns have arisen in this second privatization round over changes in the program as the process evolved, especially regarding the privatization of natural (though regulated) monopolies and the subsidization of foreign investors. Nonetheless, the program has already scored important successes providing for a large dissemination of property to private firms, worker access to ownership in companies and improved financial positions for newly privatized companies.

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In UK, privatization leaves government shelves bare

The British love a bargain. Until the present recession, standing in line for store sales was a national pastime. One ongoing sale proved so popular that near riots sometimes broke out in the City of London. This was the phenomenon known as privatization.

The disposal of a substantial part of the UK government's industrial assets was a cornerstone of the Thatcher administration's policy over the last decade.

The era of privatization in the UK is almost certainly drawing to a close, not long after the architect of this phenomenon herself left the stage.

In total, the UK government will have raised nearly US$78 billion from its asset sales which began publicly when 50 percent of British Aerospace was sold 10 years ago. The state entities which have been passed to private hands include the cream of British industry in key sectors ranging from energy to telecommunications.

The debate over the ultimate consequences of privatization has always been a lively one.

The government recognizes, though, that raising revenue to reduce the level of public debt is a finite exercise. The November sale of the electricity industry has left the government's shelves almost bare. Privatization of the coal and railway industries has been pencilled in for the next Conservative administration, but at present neither industry has the financial stamina to survive in the private sector.

Certainly, privatization has boosted the number of individual shareholders in the UK; from only two million in 1975 it multiplied to about 10 million by the end of last year. Yet the proportion of outstanding shares held by institutional investors – principally, pension funds and insurance companies – has also increased, to no less than 80 percent.

The government has deliberately spread the new shares thinly. Most investors hold only a few hundred, which is proving irksome both for the newly privatized companies, who must maintain a bulky shareholder register, and for individuals, who find that rising dealing costs make such tiny holdings barely worthwile.

This issue came to the fore last November when shares for the regional electricity companies were massively oversold. Allocations were pared back so severely that most investors received only 100 shares worth $195 at the initial price. Worse, some investors who received no shares at all found that their checks had been cashed and had to wait weeks for a refund.

The electricity sale was the government's largest as well

as its last. Scheduled as the grand finale of the privatization program, the event was tainted well before its closing minutes. First, in 1989, the government was forced against its will to drop nuclear power stations from the sale, after it miscalculated their running costs. Then, last summer, it began talks with Hanson, the industrial conglomerate, on a possible private sale of Power Gen, one of two British electricity generators. When talks began to unravel, the government decided to revert to a public sale early in 1991.

Nonetheless, many investors have profited handsomely from privatization. The electricity sale may have resembled a lottery to unlucky investors but those who did get shares are already sitting on a gain of over 50 percent. Further back in privatization's history, those who scrambled to buy shares in Jaguar, when it was sold in 1984, realized a fivefold profit when the company was bought by Ford in 1989.

The big utilities like British Gas and British Telecom have generated respectable profits since becoming privatized but this is largely because they still hold monopolies in their markets. Telecom has improved its services but the industry regulator, appointed by the government to keep an eye on standards, believes that services and prices could be even more favourable to the consumer.

This attitude will be reinforced if a socialist government is returned at the next general election, due by mid 1992 at the latest. The Labour Party has said it will renationalize only certain industries, principally Telecom and the water and electricity companies. But the government would insist that all the utilities pay more attention to prices and less to dividends.

The jury is still out on the success of the UK privatization experiment. Its instigators can take some comfort from the fact that the process is being repeated around the world, often following the British model. If nothing else, privatization has been added to the vocabulary of industry.

By Nigel Adam
in LONDON, UK

HUNGARY's SHAKY PROGRESS

In Hungary, nobody is satisfied with privatization's pace. Despite numerous program proposals, drafts, arguments and amendments to laws, there has been little progress.

There is also a growing suspicion that some privatization schemes have led to massive giveaways of state assets which may have added only a droplet to an already shrinking pool of government revenue.

Reinstating private ownership is a difficult task in a country where even every grocery store was socialized. Yet, the principle of privatization is firmly entrenched and can be carried out in three approved procedures.

The first is a change in ownership initiated by the state. State-owned enterprises are supposed to be offered for sale several times a year.

In the second procedure for privatization, the enterprises themselves initiate the sale. Dubbed "spontaneous privatization," this process remains a politically sensitive issue and topic of heated debate in and outside the government.

There is also a third procedure for privatization. Domestic and foreign investors – including managers and employees of the enterprises – can request the sale of a specific enterprise or shop.

Paralleling the above mentioned programs, the "pre-privatization program" was initiated through a special act of parliament in the retail trade, restaurant industry and consumer services. Its development is a good example of the difficulties which new governments face in previously socialist countries. The idea of an enterprise which is formally under state control but is in fact run independently and leased was an obvious solution for the transition to private ownership. Under this program, retail and restaurants may be leased from the government by employees, who then deliver preordained monthly payments, retaining any additional profits.

The idea saw daylight, but some managers, especially those linked to the political elite, often took advantage of generous leasing terms. Unrealistically low prices were set on the equipment which was contributed by the state along with the capital base, again to the managers' advantage.

The role of foreign capital, for the time being, is also problematic. All agree that the Hungarian economy cannot be privatized without a massive injection of foreign capital. The privatization of large industrial enterprises calls for Western investors, but in an uncertain economic environment they are not going out of their way to invest.

The risk of selling state enterprises below true market prices can be reduced, if overseeing institutions are involved in transactions to provide a public check on the process. But this approach also has its drawbacks since, as a general rule, the more administrative procedures there are, the fewer buyers and the more cumbersome privatization becomes.

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DISCUSSION FORUM

The Third Rome

All our misfortunes happen because of the extensive mode of development which is more than just an economic term

Kommir Krizhanovsky

In its development, a society may cross some decisively important boundary quite unnoticingly and enter the world governed by different laws. For Russia, the decisive year was 1552, and the boundary, the border of the Kazan khanate. Having crossed that border, Russia began a series of conquests, an endless string of wars for four centuries to come. The Juggernaut of war has crushed millions of human lives and a lion's share of the product of the economy. Regretfully, Russia began to see no need in the development of her own economy after she learned that she could get means to sustain her life in other lands: the Volga Region, Siberia, the Baltics, Kuban, Poland, the Caucasus, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, Far East, Manchuria, annexed, step by step, during 400 years. Russia embarked on the road of extensive development and has never left this road yet.

This circumstance is strange, because the intensive mode of development seems to be more attractive, since the same amount of work yields ever more produce, which creates conditions propitious for constant development. Under extensive development, the amount of work necessary for the production of a certain amount of goods not only remains the same but sometimes even tends to increase. But reality is not that simple. The intensive way of development is incomparably more difficult, complicated and risky than the extensive way. The society is like a man and chooses the easier way, forgetting that the way of development determines the way of life. And under the intensive way, the development is accounted for mainly by the saving of the work effort, while under the extensive way, by prodigal waste of the work effort.

The Party nobility and slaves for life

Everything is interconnected in history. The process of continuous seizure, holding and plundering of other lands required utterly centralized power, huge bureaucratic machinery, the world's largest armed forces, and universal police supervision. A strong political support was also necessary. Abroad the nobility lost its influence long ago, but in Russia, the nobility and the tsar retained all of their political power until February 1917.

The nightmarish plague of Stalinism created nothing new: all the large structures and phenomena had been begotten by the extensive system long before the October Revolution. Even the Party is a new kind of nobility. The extensive system of management of an empire can be totalitarian only, its actual slogans – feudal or communist – notwithstanding. It will suffice to regard the rule of Peter the Great to see it. That rule, the road to Calvary for the people, is always dubbed here as "progressive development of Russia."

Before Peter the Great, there were four categories of peasants in this country, ranging from slaves to free peasants. Slaves, in their turn, were divided into another four categories, only one of which defined a person as a life-long slave. Peter extended this category over the entire peasantry, including the former free peasants. According to Klyuchevsky, "Legislation introduced by Peter the Great in fact meant a regress to the Graeco-Roman norm (familiar in Russia before): 'Slavery is indivisible; it knows no distinctions: if someone is a slave, it says it all.'"

An incomprehensibly high capitation tax levied on the slave was supplemented with heavy indirect taxation – a huge burden subduing both the individual's initiative and needs of a human being. The current Finance Ministry is smart but not as much as its predecessor who levied taxes on: licences to all trades and crafts, as well as baths, bees, beards, fish, salt, chalk, chess, marriages (among non-Russians), playing cards, oak coffins – every aspect of life and even death. Defaulters were given lashes and hard-labour terms. Payment of each kind of tax was controlled by a special department: fish tax department, bath tax department, etc., which gave employment to an army of bureaucrats. This brings to mind Stalin's era when experts on chickens, bees, pigs, fruit trees and similar excisable attractions were making farmers' lives very hard indeed.

A vast mass of peasants lived in abject poverty for centuries. They lived on a brink of famine which followed each time when crops were poor. Since the time of Peter the Great, famine was part of life in Russia under monarchy, which, however, didn't prevent the country from exporting grain in increasing quantities. That tendency remained even in the late 19th century. In 1891, marked by famine, grain accounted for 48 per cent of Russia's export. Peasants were abandoning their farms and fields and fleeing in thousands. That exodus couldn't be stopped by any force, even by the fear of death. It was indeed a great misfortune for Russia, since fleeing were the most active and enterprising peasants without whom any mutinies and revolutions are impossible. Central Russia knew not a single large popular revolt for three centuries following the uprising led by Ivan Bolotnikov. There's been no uprising here even at the time of Pugachev-led rebellion when his troops reached the Volga from the east. Therefore, the popular pressure in that area was traditionally weak, but then the oppression was particularly strong. After all, any state administration can have only as much power as it is allowed by the people. The weaker the resistance, the stronger the tyrannic oppression. Power is like water and tends to fill as much volume as it is allowed.

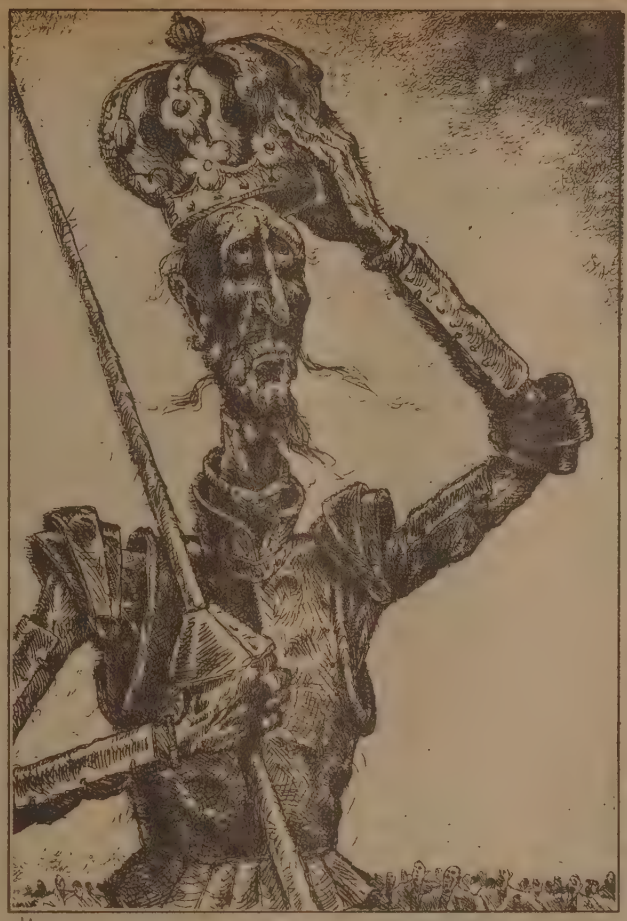
Each drinking house pays for a battalion

Not only water and power are omnipenetrating. Peter the Great virtually hit gold: he discovered something which, along with the professional army, maintained monarchy in

Russia for two centuries to come. The state monopolized sale of hard liquor. Since then, drinking houses could be found at every corner.

No other commodity can be sold at a greater profit. We've seen that it is too bad for the people that the giant profit goes to the state. There's certain political consideration here: sober people pose greater danger for a tyrannical regime than drunken people. Perhaps that was the reason why the anti-alcoholism drive lasted here merely a couple of years and then got discredited by resounding criticism. But that was nothing new as well. Teetotalism spread over Lithuania and 32 regions in Russia 130 years ago. Some drinking houses were attacked and ravaged. Enraged authorities sent troops against the peasants to retaliate for encroachment on that important source of revenue. After the last seats of teetotalism were eliminated, 800 people were tried by military courts.

By the beginning of the 19th century, sale of vodka brought 25 percent of the state revenue. In 1859-63, it accounted for 40 percent of the revenue, and in 1892, 28 percent (of the total sum of 970 million rubles). From the time of Peter the Great till the time of Nicholas II, the main item of expenditure of the state was its armed forces. In the peaceful year 1892, the payment of debts left 659 million rubles, from which sum 284 million went to pay the needs of the army (which made 43 percent). Forty years before that, Count Kankrin, member of the State Council, said, in reply to criticism against the government's encouragement of drinking, tersely: "With us, each drinking house pays for a battalion."



Drawing by Igor Smirnov

Joseph takes after Peter

Reforms of Peter the Great and Stalin's reforms are very similar in essence. When designing a prison, the architect's primary concern is the strength of its walls, not the comfort of its future inhabitants. Even less is its design coordinated with ideological demands. Judge for yourself. Peter the Great introduced slavery; Stalin, semi-bondslavery (for workers), full bondslavery (for peasants), and slavery (for millions of convicts). For both of the rulers, state expansion was the chief goal of foreign policy. Both of them were true servants for the extensive system, and the system served them well in return. For them, violence was the chief means of reaching that goal, and alienation was the chief means of managing the economy. This alienation concerned not only the implements of work, but also almost all the produce. That attitude had its logic: since the producer belongs to the state or to the lord, then everything he produces must also belong there.

Both state leaders demonstrated domination of policy over the economy. The extensive system requires that almost every factor of intensive development must be eliminated (all these factors cannot be eliminated, since some of them are necessary to provide the development of the extensive system). Each "father of the nation" knew – if not from his own mental analysis, then from his own instinct, or from tradition – that his boundless power was ensured by extensive development.

They divided the society into the elite who could do anything they wanted, and the rest of the public who were allowed almost nothing. People were put in chancery of secret instructions, rather than laws, while the elite was almost free of the need to revere the law.

For two years now, we can openly see the weakness of the law and strength of instructions. We see how the beginnings of the intensive way get nipped in the bud by the extensive system.

What can be the price for such development? Only degradation. Speaking about the time from the rule of Peter the Great to the rule of Nicholas II, degradation manifests itself in establishment of bondslavery and, later, slavery, autocratic rule, lawlessness and tyranny, as well as destruction of national cultures, spread of alcoholism encouraged by the state, and, as a result, spread of most heinous of social vices. We tend to forget that many people died at great construction projects, in wars, and in the military service in general, during the time of Peter the Great. The Ukraine was devastated as if by a plague, and Central Russia lost more than half of its population. That was genocide which preceded the genocide during Stalin's time. The moral loss of the society of builders of the empire was also vast.

Soldier becomes the ideal of a person. The obedience of a slave becomes the ideal of behavior. Blind faith becomes the ideal of attitude. Doggish devotion and lordly kindness become the ideal of human relations. These ideals were necessary for the society of the extensive development, and the society created them. But this society continues even today.

The "quantitative" approach still permeates the life of the current society. This system exists not only in the economy but also inside every one of us. Therefore, a transition to the intensive way of development would be the greatest revolution of all. This transition implies the need to change not only the economy, but also the entire political system and the traditions linking us to it. Instead of that, we are witnessing a well-orchestrated campaign of idealization of the past. And this is not accidental. The new nobility with Party cards are trying to get key positions in local governments and concerns, emerging political parties, and to keep their old positions in the armed forces, the KGB and police, as well as in cooperative companies, collective farms, and even in the sphere of the arts and sciences. But this calls for another autocracy, hence the idealization of the tsars, even Nicholas "the Bloody."

The Party-card nobility needs popular support, at least on the part of some portion of the public, and they are fanning chauvinism and trying to make the public believe that a death of the empire would mean the death of the entire society. They have led the country to an economic collapse and are calling for order, rule by a strong hand, and potent central power. But the central power was never weak in this country.

Don't call Russia to arms

Impressions of a former resident of Odessa upon his return to that city after a long absence

Arkady Lvov

Fourteen years ago, writer Arkady Lvov was accused of maintaining contacts with international Zionism and slandering the Soviet people. Lvov opted to emigrate to the USA. Arkady Lvov thinks about himself as a "shy dissident" who never joined any dissident or underground groups but reserved the right to independently express his critical opinions. He has visited the USSR twice in the last two years.

It's painful

I can't remember a single instance of heart ache during my visit here last year. But this time it's different: it is really painful to see certain things. Of course, last time I saw some scenes which could be heart-wrenching. For example, an old woman came to a chemist's shop and asked for valocordinum. "We don't have it," was the answer. "Then, do yo have something for a headache?" "Nothing." "But what do you have?" "Only leonurus tincture." "What's that for?" "Buy it and find out." "I don't think I need it now. I will buy it when I do." "Do you think we are going to still have it when you need it?" The woman was about to leave but on second thought decided to buy leonurus tincture. The whole scene was absurd, as if it was a dialogue between two creatures who were not normal human beings. Last year such situations only made me smile, but now they make me feel very sad.

What astonished me last year was the hatred written in people's faces. It seemed that even a negligible incident could provoke people to vent these kinds of emotion. Nowadays, this emotion has subsided. Now I see an awareness of doom, apathy, and downward looks. I try to rationalize what I see and to understand what these people are capable of, what they count on, and what they have at stake.

Last year I attempted to sell Odessa's local authorities the idea of setting a free economic zone up. It was not a new idea. In fact, two cities which are now part of the Soviet Union had this status in the past: Odessa and Riga. I was aware that the idea would be hard to sell since people were simply not ready to accept a free economic zone and no one really knew what the idea might imply. But I hoped that residents of Odessa would somehow accept the idea. After all, the memory of generations past is still present in the Odessan people. When one of them is asked how he feels about having a free economic zone in the city, he may know nothing about the matter but is certain to say: we had it in this city before, and the general opinion is that it was a good thing.

Incompetence as an attribute of authority

I met with the city's authorities and tried to explain my intentions. I suggested that they establish contacts with American business people. Everyone agreed. But when we began discussing my project I realized that they didn't know a bit of what an ordinary well-educated person was expected to know on the subject. The worst aspect was that they thought they knew everything. Later I found some people who were recommended to me as experts and invited them to Harvard. I thought that these people must – because of their occupations, qualifications, and academic degrees – understand the problem. But it became clear at Harvard that they didn't have the slightest idea about what they were supposed to do. Their incompetence was fantastic.

I arrived at a frightening conclusion: incompetence is a typical feature of Soviet people today and a necessary attribute of the present-day Soviet power. This is a result of the abstinence from real work for almost a whole century. People were studying the wrong issues, giving things wrong names, and using an incorrect pattern of social behaviour to educate their children. People thought only about procuring better conditions for themselves, though the conditions that could be provided were abject. But the leaders of the country eventually brought about a situation when even such conditions were regarded as an award. The incompetence remains along with the power structure.

I asked a top official at a regional government office in Odessa about his opinion on establishing a free economic zone locally. He said that the idea would be hard to implement in Odessa; but the city of Illyichyovsk would be a better choice. I was surprised to see him so liberally deciding for the city and expressed my doubt that he would succeed in obtaining the consent of the city's municipal council. "Don't tell me about the municipal council. I know how to deal with them," he said and waved a clenched fist in an explicit gesture.

It is beyond these people that there can exist another system of inter-relationships. They do not understand me when I try to explain that it would not occur to the US President, let alone the New York state governor, to interfere with the municipality's affairs.

Democracy can't be introduced by a decree

To enable a country to develop normally, private initiative must be given free rein, and personal responsibility for one's own actions must be introduced. But where are people who can carry out this programme? I spoke with many of the "democrats" and discovered that all of them had been formed after the communist pattern and in fact were true communists. I do not mean to say that they had a communist mentality and sincerily believed in communist ideals. But they lived according to communist rules and made their careers in full keeping with these rules. Communist ethics were the core of their lives and to observe this code of ethics was necessary for professional promotion. I can agree that their political views underwent a change in the last few years, but their behavior remained the same. Therefore, I refuse to believe that such people can be rated as true democrats.

I do not believe them. This country has no democratic tradition. Democracy cannot be introduced by decree. It can be likened to the famous grass in English parks which never becomes worn from trampling. Does it need special treatment to acquire this property? No, it has to be mown regularly for two centuries. It's simple as that.

Since the democratic processes in this country are accompanied by bloodshed, then the people who call themselves democrats may well turn into dictators.

Traditional Russian muddle reigns supreme

Everything that was posed as the highest democratic achievement throughout Russia's history was expressed in a concentrated form in the famous line: "Call upon Russia to rise in arms." Didn't Russia take

Photo by Gyulab Martirosyan

up arms? It did, many times. Klyuchevsky was right: in this country, every revolt against the state administration eventually turned into a wild mutiny characterized by indiscriminate violence. Mind you, Klyuchevsky was far from being a conservatively-minded person or a clerical. In late 1916 and early 1917, when disintegration set in in Russia, a founder of the Constitutional Democratic Party Pavel Milyukov realized that Russia should not be left without a formal head of state, because the country lacked the tradition of a republican democracy and local self-government. Prince Georgy Lvov, first head of the Provisional Government in Russia, was at first enthusiastic that the Russian peasants were clever enough to set up a new form of self-government: the Soviets. But he resigned from this post after only two months in office, with none of his former enthusiasm left, saying that the Soviets should have been dissolved and crowds should have been dispersed by gun fire, but he couldn't bring himself to issue the orders. The reason was clear: Lvov was brought up believing that Russian peasants possess some kind of special wit, a certain instinct which can prompt the best form of government. Rubbish. People must have adequate experience for that. Democracy cannot emerge without prior experience of local self-government.

What this country is now going through is nothing more than an emotional outburst, because no serious programme has been advanced yet.

No one knew what to do with the power gained in April of 1917. There was some dim apprehension of a rise of anarchy. The removal of monarchy, this traditional form of government, led to a certain degree of anarchy which at first was praised as the supreme democratic achievement. But that was not democracy. In fact, it was the first stage of anarchy, and the people were already longing for state power. It is a silly notion that the Bolsheviks led a conspiracy which forced a coup d'etat. They won because the people wanted some kind of power, any power. Half of the officers in the tsarist army joined the Red Army. Did they love the Bolsheviks dearly? No, they simply got sick and tired of the traditional Russian muddle, and that was their natural reaction to anarchy. The foundation of Cheka, this horrifying punitive organization, was also a reaction to anarchy. Incidentally, the Red Army is always posed as a military force which protects the Republic of the Soviets. But this Army also has punitive functions. Red Army men – former peasants themselves – made special expeditions to steal grain from peasants. Tyranny was a direct consequence of anarchy.

I am afraid that something similar can happen today. Ernest Renan had an interesting thought: a quick advance of Christianity in the East was due to neurasthenia suffered by the then eastern society. Neurasthenia makes people particularly susceptible to new ideas. I think that the Russian society of today is suffering from neurasthenia. This explains why all kinds of ideas even absolutely groundless ones which can look attractive only because they contain nice promises are taken so seriosly.

Two mistakes in one century

Two gross mistakes were committed in Russia within the last one hundred years. The first mistake was made by Lenin when he began to seek the support of the people. He shifted the focus of attention from the economy to politics and declared that proletarians would take power and create conditions which would lead to the normal development of the entire society. Wasn't this the same belief in a supertalent of ordinary people that Prince Lvov had? Who can prove that people are so talented that they will immediately create normal conditions for social development as soon as they gain power in a country? People were not prepared for it. They could not even unite themselves. It was from this situation that the Party emerged. The Party quickly grew into a cancerous tumour which affected every sphere of life. Today, it is no longer the people who decide their future, it is the Party.

The same mistake has been repeated by Gorbachev in our own time (incidentally, I have always felt great sympathy for Gorbachev). He comes to Moscow form Stavropol and has no connections in the Party apparatus. He is young unlike the rest of the lot, and that alone is enough to make people think well of him. But he needs support. His predecessor Brezhnev was in fact master of the Party and the military-industrial complex which he always supported. He had support in the armed forces and in the Party. Andropov (I believe he was a great man) created his own state security mechanism which was fully under his control. It was a powerful machinery which could create a revolution in the country at a wave of Andropov's hand. Chernenko was a Party functionary, Breznhev's right hand, who simply took the supreme post over almost as a legal heir. But where could Gorbachev seek support for himself? With the Party? No. With the armed forces? No. With the military-industrial complex? No. But how can a national leader work without proper support? Then he reminded himself about the people and turned there for support. His bid for popular support was called glasnost. As a man with the Party mentality, he believed that people would support him in recognition of his being their potential liberator. In gratitude, people would start to work harder. But Gorbachev didn't know whom he was dealing with. The labour ethics of the Soviet people is vastly different from the ethics of Germans or Japanese who are going to work hard under any government. Gorbachev shouldn't have counted on the Soviet people. Instead, the people should have been taught democracy and how to create structures of self-government. Personal responsibility for one's own actions should have been introduced, and state property should have been turned into private possessions. Private initiative alone can instill proper individual responsibility before society. There is still time to switch onto the road leading in this direction. ■

Hammarskjöld's last flight

On September 17, 1961, the UN Secretary General's plane crashed in Africa. Today, thirty years later, we still do not have the answer to the question of whether that was an assassination or an accident

In March, 1953, the UN building buzzed like a beehive: the members of the Secretariat were discussing Dag Hammarskjold, the then newly elected UN Secretary-General. Those keen on linguistics wondered what the origin of his family name, which is the Swedish for "hammer and shield," was; moralists pointed to the Secretary-General's indifference to women and excessive interest in men; history buffs recalled that his father had been a conservative Prime Minister of Sweden, and that Dag himself had betrayed his class, the aristocracy, and defected to Social-Democrats.

Indeed, his father had been a hard-hearted individual and maltreated him – but he had also taught Dag to resist dictation and to have the courage of his convictions. To be neutral meant to say "No" rather than "Yes" to the either side, he said during World War I – and lost the Prime Minister's post; the British, displeased with his "inflexible" interpretation of Sweden's neutrality, were rumoured to have had a hand in his demotion. In his early childhood, his mother dressed him like a girl and took him along to ladies' parties – but she also instilled in him love of art which later manifested itself in his excellent photographs and no means literary works.

Before very long, the UN officials had ample occasion to see that whatever his sex preferences were, Dag Hammarskjold definitely preferred the UN flag to be blue, not red or starred and striped. But where there was a flag, there had to be a ship. Given to thinking in poetical images, Dag began to compare the UN with Columbus' *Santa Maria* caravel setting out in search of new and better worlds.

Hammarskjold regarded himself as an European par excellence (in the Western sense of the word), and his "mission" – as a "crusade" to spread "European heritage". Dag had sought to emerge from the field of the great powers' political gravity and to become the leader of the world government, as it were, the president of the planet.

The Hammarskjölds' coat of arms

The African trump card

The White House knew all about Hammarskjold's ambitious schemes – its "sources" in the UN reported to it every interesting entry the Secretary-General made in his diary. Paris and London did not like it, of course, when Hammarskjold supported Nasser and, with an indirect support of Moscow, sent the French and the British packing from the banks of the Suez Canal. On the other hand, the American influence in the Middle East increased. Washington wasn't ever-enthusiastic, of course, about the UN Secretary-General's overt support for Soviet moratorium on nuclear tests, announced in 1958, but then Dag Hammarskjold was as sympathetic towards the stand taken by the United States which made its joining the moratorium conditional on the Soviet consent to ending the production of fissile materials and inspecting atomic installations.

As he pursued his object, Hammarskjold, like a tight-rope walker, swung to any side in order to keep his balance. However, flexibility ceased being of any use to him after the Swede began to show to much initiative, and the Americans unambiguously gave him to understand that he was just a "top-ranking official" not the boss of the UN.

Dag began to alternate bouts of vigorous activity with fits of melancholy because his designs and hopes smashed against the great powers' opposition. Political demarches and backstage intrigues against the UN Secretary-General developed into personal attacks on him. The socialist countries' papers heaped abuse on the "NATO lackey"; the Western press engaged in all sorts of speculations about his private life – his sex habits, in particular.

Dag Hammarskjold turned his gaze to Africa which was then fighting for independence against colonialists. In his opinion, young states could actively contribute towards elevating the UN's status in the world. "The great powers can

protect themselves without the United Nations, the UN is needed by its other members," he maintained upon touring Africa. His rare purposefulness and excellent health enabled him to visit 24 countries in a space of one month, to meet hundreds of African politicians emerging on the national and world arena.

There had been only four African countries among the 51 founders of the United Nations; towards the end of 1960, the UN already had 27 African member-states. The Declaration on decolonization, drawn up with the Secretary-General, then just reelected for a second term, taking an active part was, he hoped, to serve him as the Archimedean lever using which he would change the balance of forces in the UN entirely. Relying on the majority vote he had secured on account of new members of the Security Council, Hammarskjold sought to override, if not to abolish the veto exercised by the permanent members of the Security Council and to gain control over it.

The UN Secretary-General inspecting a Swedish UN force in the Congo. The Swedes failed to make peace in that country and to enhance their countryman's influence in world politics

The clash in the Congo

The wave of decolonization, which swept the continent, reached its heart, the Belgian Congo (now Zaire). The Belgians had planned to "grant" their colony independence on July 1, 1985, on the 100th anniversary of the "first Congolese state" created by King Leopold II of Belgium. Local radicals demanded freedom and power immediately, and achieved them on June 30, 1960, when Prime Minister Lumumba and President Kasawubu of the Congo declared their country's independence.

Brussels put a brave face on the affair and recognized the Congo's independence. On July 7, the newly-independent nation joined the United Nations.

The Congo, especially its Katanga province rich in minerals, was regarded as the "choicest titbit" of Africa: found in its entrails is a good half of the Table of Elements, including uranium (incidentally, the uranium which went into making the bombs for Hiroshima and Nagasaki had come from the Congo), gold, cobalt, copper, diamonds... Big corporations operated there, with the family interests of the Rockefellers, Morgans and Rothshields predominating.

The corporations were not willing to hand over the keys to the treasure-trove to Lumumba – an obscure postal worker and a "Communist." And quite a few of the new-fangled Congolese politicians turned out to be power-hungry.

At the time when in the UN "glasshouse" in New York the Belgian representative wished "prosperity" to the people of the Congo, and the US Ambassador likened its people fight for freedom with the American war for independence, Tschombe demanded the separation of Katanga and, with a force of white mercenaries buttressing him up, proclaimed himself its president. Lumuba and Kasawubu emplaned for Elizabethville (Lubumbashi), the capital of Katanga, rightaway, but their plane was not allowed to land there.

"The Congo Club"

Dag Hammarskjold had vast information on the rebels' actions, on Belgians' operations, on American moves and on the Congo government's counter-measures. He set up "The Congo Club," a small group of advisers to "control the conflict" in the far-off African country. The Club's representative in the Congo talked Lumumba into appealing for help to the United Nations, and helped him to word the message in such a way as to impart to it the form of a personal request addressed to Hammarskjold. This gave the latter a pretext for having the Security Council pass a resolution on sending the UN troops and experts to the Congo for the purpose of maintaining security and administrative order there. He assumed, privately, control over this operation of unprecedented scale aimed at withdrawing the Congo from the superpowers' zone of influence and preventing the country from becoming an arena of another East-West conflict.

All of a sudden, he came up against an obstacle: Lumumba, that "extremist and upstart," wished to keep the situation in the country under his control. "The Congo is me," the former postman said in dead earnest and without batting an eyelid in response to Dag Hammarskjold's suggestion that the Congolese leaders should enter into a dialogue under the auspices of the Secretary-General. Displeased with the UN whole troops were passive vis-à-vis the rebels and whose emissaries, Hammarskjold included, tried to "appease" Tshombe, the Prime Minister appealed to the Congo's African neighbours for help. The latter were willing to give him a hand, but were in no position to oppose Belgium and the white mercenaries who surpassed Africans in the standard of combat training.

Lumumba flew to Canada where he had a confidential meeting with the Soviet Ambassador and was promised active cooperation. In particular, the Soviet side was prepared to send over to the Congo 29 planes, 100 trucks, 200 technicians and, possibly, "Soviet volunteers." Encouraged by these promises, the Congolese leader sent a telegram to Hammarskjold which said: "You have lost our trust." But Lumumba himself lost all ground in the country: Colonel Mobutu carried out a military coup, sent experts and even Ambassadors from socialist countries home, and compelled the Prime Minister himself to turn to the UN soldiers for protection.

The Khrushchev shoe bang

The Soviet Union was not happy about the developments in the Congo and finally, at the end of 1960, demanded an end to the UN operations there. An emergency session of the General Assembly voted for a continued effort, however. The commitment of the fighter like Nikita Khrushchev into action did not help Moscow any. After

Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba of the Congo in captivity. He wasn't a "toy" in Hammarskjöld's hands

the U–2 spy-plane scandal and the breakdown of the planned Summit, he contemplated a frontal attack on the US and its allies and sought to use the United Nations platform for the purpose. The UN Secretary-General declined to send an invitation to the First Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee but was in no position, of course, to prevent his coming to New York.

The Soviet leader brandished his shoe or even banged it on a desk (eyewitness accounts differ on this score), level devastating criticism against the US administration and its ilk, and suggested that the UN headquarters be transferred to Vienna, Geneva or Moscow, and that the post of the Secretary-General be abolished and replaced by a "trio" representing Western, Eastern and neutral states. "We do not trust Mr. Hammerskjold," he said. Neither the Soviet proposal, nor the demonstration of custom-made executive shoe made any impression in the United Nations. As for the Secretary-General, he naturally ignored the demand that he should tender his resignation.

Then Khrushchev suddenly changed tactics and asked the Swede over for a formal reception in his New York residence. To the guests' utter surprise, Khrushchev bade Hammarskjold a friendly welcome and even gave him a hearty hug. Janos Kadar, who stood right next to Khrushchev, expressed his surprise at the scene, and the Kremlin boss explained with a grin: "It is a custom with Caucasian mountaineers to share bread and salt with an enemy who calls on them at home. But after he has gone out, nothing prevents them from slashing his throat." Indeed, from that day on, the UN leader was denied cooperation from Soviet representatives, and Moscow stopped funding the UN operations in the Congo altogether.

On November 28, 1960, Lumumba escaped from his shelter, which had become his prison in fact, but was presently captured by Mobutu's thugs and handed over to Tshombe. Upon being subjected to torture and abuse, Lumuba and his comrades were brutally murdered.

Hammarskjold's plans were dashed to the ground. Even the presence of thousands of "blue helmets" in the Congo was of no help. Owing to a covert or overt sabotage of the great powers, the mechanism of rendering the Congo administrative, material and technical aid did not work, and a torrent of criticism threatened to sweep over the East River skyscraper. The Secretary-General was on the verge of despair, he couldn't understand why things had gone awry, but he kept hoping that he would succeed in his efforts to put the situation in the Congo right. On the eve of the opening of the autumn, 1961, General Assembly session, he emplaned for Africa.

The official aim of the trip was to conduct negotiations with Adoula, a new Prime Minister. However, the UN troops launched Operation Morthar in Katanga right on the day of the Secretary-General's arrival. They acted in accordance with the UN resolution which directly called for measures to restore the authority of the lawful government over the entire territory of the Congo and to prevent Katanga's breakaway.

A leak of information about the objectives of Operation Morthar enabled the rebels to take forestalling action. Tshombe found refuge in Northern Rhodesia. Instead of scoring a triumph, the Secretary-General came under heavy fire from all quarters: Lumumba followers criticized him for indecision, Tshombe's allies for arbitrariness, and the rest for the loss of lives among the "blue helmets."

Sir Lansdowne, Britain's Deputy Foreign Secretary, arrived in Leopoldville (Kinshasa) specially to demand, on behalf of the Western powers, that the Secretary-General should meet with Tshombe without delay. "I think I ought to try and meet with you in order to reach an agreement on the way to solve the problems that exist," the UN leader wrote grudgingly to the Katanga butcher, Tshombe agreed to negotiate in Ndola, Northern Rhodesia, on condition that the UN stopped flying the "blue helmets" to Katanga.

For the sake of appearances, Hammarskjold asked Lansdowne, who was also going to Ndola, to leave the town before his own arrival there. Lansdowne agreed but added, not too politely, that he would have lunch with the staff of the British Consulate, first. As a result, the UN leader's departure, originally scheduled for 10 a.m., was postponed for the duration of the lunch which somehow lasted until "late dinner" or "early supper" time. Lansdowne's plane took off as late as at 5.04 p.m., and Hammarskjold's, at 5.51 p.m.

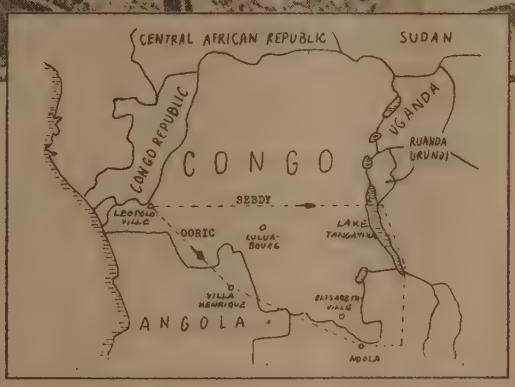
Death in the jungle

Five and a half hours later, the Lord landed in Ndola, next to the border between Northern Rhodesia and Katanga and satisfied himself that Tshombe was ready for negotiations. Lansdowne had to proceed to Salisbury (Harare), but decided to join the mixed company which was waiting for Hammarskjold at the airport. An hour and a half later, the DC–6 of the Swedish Transair company reached Ndola upon covering a distance 1.5 times longer than Lansdowne's plane had: to be on the safe side, the pilots made a detour, bypassing Katanga from the east. The DC–6 radioed the air traffic controller for a clearance to land, flew over the control tower, rolled into a steep banking turn so as to make the final approach – and disappeared.

Presently the Lord's plane took off in a hurry, and those who had waited for the UN Secretary-General left the airport. The airport personnel called it a day. Tshombe was the first to leave – 15 minutes before the scheduled time of the DC's arrival. It looked as if Hammarskjold's fate cut no ice with anyone.

The Albertina (Swedish planes have names) had crashed into the slope of a low hill nine miles west of Ndola. Although night had already fallen and the sky was clear, no one at the airport or on board Lord Lansdowne's plane noticed a blaze in the jungle 200 m long and 50 m wide. The wreckage lay next to a Ndola highway, a twenty minutes' drive away from the town...

The wreckage of the Albertina. Why does the mystery behind the accident remain unravelled?



The chart of Hammarskjöld's last flight

It was found only on the following day.

For quite a while, no one believed the witnesses: the bosses regarded the DC–6 as "simply "missing"...

The policemen who finally reached the place of the accident found a mass of half-molten fragments, 14 charred bodies (some of them with bullet holes), Hammarskjold's corpse untouched by fire, and the only survivor, Sergeant Harry Julian of the Secretary-General's escort. The man was rushed to a hospital where police briefly questioned him while he could still talk.

"The last message came in when the plane was over the Ndola airfield."

"The plane exploded."

"Over the airfield?"

"Yes... It flew at a high speed... Then it fell... Everything was brightly lit... I opened the emergency door and got out."

"What about the other? What happened to them?"

"They were trapped!"

Julian was given tranquillizer injections, and he couldn't even open his eyes. Presently the Sergeant died without regaining consciousness any more. American representatives did not bother to look up their fellow-countryman.

Investigation

The accident was investigated by those who were, directly or indirectly, responsible for what had happened. Since radars were out of order for some obscure reason, and the radio traffic with the Albertina was not recorded on magnetic tape or at least in a register, the only evidence the local investigation commission could go by came from the airport chief and the air traffic controller. Both maintained that there had been no other planes in the flight zone, that upon its departure from Leopoldville the DC–6 had not informed Ndola it was going to land there, and that it had kept radio silence throughout its flight. Therefore, the commission concluded, the plane could not possibly become a target of the Katanga rebels' air attack, there were no signs of sabotage and the Albertina had crashed into the hill side as a result of either the pilots' error or a technical flaw. The commission, however, found no direct or indirect evidence to support this conclusion.

Dag Hammarskjold "probably died right after the crash" – the impact of the fall threw him out of the cabin. His travelling companions were less fortunate – according to Rhodesian investigators, they had suffered not only from the fall of the Albertina, but also from the poisonous smoke of the resultant fire; besides, the overheated ammunition of their own personal weapons had inflicted gunshot wounds on them.

A special UN group (which comprised representatives of Sweden, Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone, Nepal and Argentina) did not question the conclusions of the Rhodesian commission but brought in an "open verdict" saying that the accident could have resulted from an error, a technical fault, sabotage or an attack, but that there was no evidence for any of these versions. The group, which arrived in Ndola almost six months after the accident, proceeded in its work from the findings of the Rhodesian commission. It made no serious attempts to carry out an inquiry of its own by questioning witnesses and organizing technical inspection. It did nothing on its own initiative except inviting the Swiss criminalist Dr. Frei-Sulzer who melted aluminium fragments but, having found no "foreign metallic matter" in them ruled out sabotage or an attack.

Thirty years later

Now that the relative materials of the Swedish Foreign Ministry have been declassified, one cannot help noticing a large number of major mistakes (if not deliberate omissions) made by the commissions. The hints at the pilots' incompetence are untenable – each had logged over 7,000 flying hours and, what is of special importance, a third of this time fell on night flights. The DC–6 – its altimeters and control systems, in particular – had been in an excellent state of repair. Many other conclusions made by the Rhodesian authorities have proved to hold no water.

The Swedish experts Nils Ringertz and Arne Trykholm drew up, back in February, 1962, a secret memorandum for the Swedish government to the effect that the crash had not killed the Secretary-General instantly, and that he might have lived had he received medical attention on time. The atopsy of the corpses revealed that the fire had probably started not on impact, but when the plane was still airborne. This is evidenced, in particular, by two empty fire extinguishers which had probably been used by the crew in attempt to put out the fire on board. The spread of the seats in the wreckage indicates that the plane had exploded in the air rather than crash-landed.

Bo Virving, the Transair representative in the Congo, prepared "a reconstruction of the events which led to the accident." It follows from the "reconstruction" that the talk about the Albertina's "radio silence" is just a myth because the DC–6 had reported to the Ndola air traffic controller its whereabouts and, while still over the Tanganyika Lake, informed him that it was going to make a landing. The white legionnaires in Katanga had listened in to the UN planes' radio messages and could well send out the fighter aircraft they kept at the Jadotville and Kipushi airdromes to intercept them. As a matter of fact, no secret was made of the forthcoming talks in Ndola: one of the negotiating partners was to have been none other than Tshombe!

Dr. Frei-Sulzer's behaviour is now seen as not altogether irreproachable: out of the DC–6 plane's 32-ton "live weight" he had

got hold of only 0.5 tons, i.e. 1.5 percent. Several grams of steel left from a detonating fuse (if a bomb had been planted in the plane, and if it had worked upon a loss of altitude as the plane started on the final approach), and even kilos of air-to-air missile fragments (if the Albertina had been attacked by a plane) could well remain outside the Swiss experts' field of vision. All the more so since the remnants of the DC–6 were picked up by the Rhodesians not too thoroughly and were even deliberately eliminated, perhaps, whenever that was thought necessary. At any rate, some of the truckloads of wreckage are known to have disappeared on their way to the airdrome.

If the methods used in the sixties failed to reveal particles of explosives, today experts could do the analysis a thousand of times more thoroughly. Unfortunately, all the remnants of the Albertina have disappeared without a trace, and the land in the place of the accident has been ploughed up and sieved on the instructions of Rhodesian police.

In their numerous interviews given over the intervening years, white mercenaries claimed it was they who had killed Hammarskjold and his retinue. However, no proof of that is adduced. Old evidence given by tens of eye-witnesses confirms that the Albertina was not alone in the sky over Ndola. A wealth of such evidence is found in the foreign Ministry's archives.

Davidson Simango, a Negro charcoal dealer: "I saw two planes... then an intense white flash, and heard a loud bang of an explosion."

Yvonne Joubert, a white housewife: "As I sat in an armchair reading a book... I heard a jet plane and then a transport plane powered by conventional engines. Presently I dozed off and was awakened by an explosion, then I saw a glow."

It was easy enough to deal with black eye-witnesses – they were ridiculed ("he's got no watch, how could he know what time it was"), intimidated ("his house ought to be search, he might have stolen something from the wreckage"), or compromised ("he listens in to Radio Moscow"). The evidence given by white witnesses was put down by the air attaché in person, distorting the meaning of their answers to his questions. Any attempt made by an eye-witness to give the UN commission different evidence would mean that he has perjured himself and is to be punished for that. The UN commission did not provide for the eye-witnesses' immunity with the result that the colonial authorities could "twist them round their little fingers" figuratively speaking.

The talk about the pilots' mistakes or technical faults sound even less verisimilar today than they did then, while the version of the DC–6 having been attacked by another plane now appears trustworthy.

A reliable source in the Secretary General's own information network had warned in 1961 that Tshombe was preparing an attempt on the UN leader's life. The Katanga rebels possessed preliminary information on the time of Hammarskjold's arrival in Ndola. Tshombe left the airport fifteen minutes before that time. Combat planes stationed on Katanga's air bases could patrol the sky over Ndola, easily spot the huge DC–6 liner's navigation lights, and down it with a single missile.

Removing the traces of the attack was no problem at all for those who had chosen Ndola as the meeting place, who had taken no measures to guarantee the Secretary General's safety, who had not organized the search for the missing plane property, and who intimidated eye-witnesses and "lost" the fragments of the Albertina in the process of investigation. They were upholding "their Africa"...

Alexander Polyukhov,
Our own correspondent

STOCKHOLM

Photos and illustrations from the archives of the Swedish Foreign Ministry's Archives, from Sten Soderberg's book "Dag Hammarskjold", from Der Spiegel magazine and from the Svenska Dagbladet newspaper

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God is One

Leonid Ionin

Christmas, the Day of the Nativity of Christ, the celebration of which was broadcast live from Moscow's Cathedral of the Epiphany, was soon followed by the Day of the Nativity of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the Communist God. The celebration was also broadcast live, this time from the Bolshoi. Although the ritual was different, and the attires much more modest, the purpose of the event was the same: to consolidate the faithful and to affirm the continuity of the mythological tradition.

Much is being written currently about the communist myth which is identified with the quasireligious Marxist doctrine. In the framework of this identification one can observe disputes which are very much like theological disputes on the oneness of God. Was Lenin a true disciple of Marx, or did he distort Marx' teachings? Is Stalin another Lenin and what were the relations between Stalin's views and those of Karl Marx? The solution is perfectly in line with theological dialectics: Marx-Lenin-Stalin are One God.

But the myth embodied in the ritual of celebrating Lenin's another anniversary is of a different nature. I would describe it as a cosmogonic myth.

The dictionary tells us that cosmogonic myths describe the genesis of the universe. The actual state of the universe is inseparably connected with its genesis as consequence is connected with cause, for the definition and explanation of the composition of the universe and the role its objects play in it amount to the answer to the question of how the universe was created.

The myth about Lenin in the Communist Party faith is the tale of the genesis and the current state of our socialist fatherland.

The genesis first. From his or her school and college days everybody knows how the Communist Party was created and fought, how it organized and carried out the socialist revolution – day by day – how the universe of our life was created. The tale of genesis has been repeated in textbooks, guides, novels and poems for billions of times. Once and for all we have learned the hour-by-hour history of what Lenin did, where he went and what he said.

In its canonical variant, the History of the Great October Socialist Revolution is this country's Book of Genesis. "And God said: 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and god divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

Wrote the proletarian poet, Mayakovsky:

"When I look
for the grandest day
of my life,
rummaging in all
I've gone through and seen,
I name without doubt
or internal strife
October 25, 1917."

Quite a bilblical vision, isn't it?

In the cosmogonic myth about the genesis of the Soviet state Lenin's is the role of the Creator. In the seventy-odd years of this state's existence anything that happened has been inevitably associated with His Name. As the above-quoted specialists write: "the definition and explanation of the composition of the universe and the role its objects play in it amount to the answer to the question of how the universe was created."

Any mythological system must have the hub – Centre of the Universe. There is such a hub in the Soviet communist mythology. "As is known, the world begins in the Kremlin," wrote a Soviet poet. To be more precise, the world begins in the place where Creator had worked and where His Tomb now is.

There are innumerable illustrations to this myth. The official Soviet vision of the world corresponds to the structure of the cosmogonic myth in every single detail. I do not mean the biblical myth alone, but also the myths of Atzteks, Hindus and ancient Iceland. Naturally, the likeness is purely formal. One can hardly expect the content of the myths to be identical too. What is identical is the form and – the functions.

From this viewpoint the question of what is real and what is not in the myth's content becomes secondary and even excessive. Myths are one thing and historical science is something totally different. They exist in different dimensions. The Marxists spent decades trying to prove that Jesus Christ never existed. Their efforts have changed nothing. Very probably, a millennium later someone will try to prove that Lenin never lived. This will not change anything in the communist faith either.

What I want to say is that it is senseless or stupid to fight myths. The papers calling themselves "left-wing" have carried a lot of materials devoted to Lenin's anniversay. *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, for instance, ran an ironic comment on Lenin's ethnic origin, attitude to the fair sex and some other private aspects. The faithful were unmoved. And those who have no faith do not believe the communist myth without the paper's irony.

People do not learn from somebody else's mistakes: that is why they continue to fight myths. *Moskovsky Komsomolets* proudly counts its history from December 11, 1919. I did not read it then, I was simply not born yet. But I am ready to eat my hat if in the year of 1919 and many years after that, *Moskovsky Komsomolets* did not inform its readers about as juicy details of Jesus Christ's life and did not run as spiteful comments to the biblical myths. After all, the newspaper belonging to the Communist youth organization has to be militant.

What is to be done if the myth continues to exist and refuses to die? Nothing. Let the faithful celebrate one Nativity at the Cathedral of the Epiphany and another Nativity at the Bolshoi. Let others gather for the presentation ceremony of a female charm club (shaping, image, sex training). Let them do what they want. In this country the sacral life is drifting farther and farther from the profane secular one. If someone does not like it that the world begins in the Kremlin, let him or her think the world begins from the Statue of Liberty.

Why fight the myths? After all, democracy is the art of peaceful coexistence of myths.

Introduced by *New Times* analyst ***Rostislav Zolotaryov***

Today there follow below two brief contributions by Alexander Potresov, who also wrote under the pen-name of Starover (Old Believer), a founding father of the Russian Social Democratic movement. Though these slightly abridged essays were written at different times and seemingly on different subjects, as the one dated 1918 is dedicated to Marx's birth centenary, while the other written already in emigration notes the tenth anniversary of the October take-over, they possess one common theme, an attempt to fathom the meaning of the Russian revolt and also the transformation that the ideas of Marx, in whose name this revolt was effected, underwent in Russia. The face of Marx, a truly epic figure in European history, acquired a tragic tinge in Russia, which overshadowed all who in one or another manner came into contact with the Marxian heritage. We mean those who reinterpreted Marx in their own fashion, who sought to re-cut history, also life-long opponents of Marxism and, finally, those who having taken by no means an orthodox view of Marx were ever influenced by his intellectual appeal. In this last category is Alexander Potresov, who, however, viewed the October take-over as the defeat of the Russian revolution's movement for liberation.

He construed this development as "the revolution's degeneration into reaction," as the transformation of the revolutionary extreme via anarchy into "an absolute dictatorship." The Stepan Razin-like "orgy" was inevitably ordained to climax in the rule of a Bonapartist "law-and-order" party" into which the Bolshevik party gradually but inevitably developed.

The "wit works woe" of which Potresov speaks when talking about the reconstrued Marx in the local "venacular of the native aspens" is not so much a description of Marx's Russian lot as of his own lot, an attempt to rescue the dimmed ideal of socialism which the architects of the "socialist choice" so hopelessly damaged. To regain the socialist ideas even not in its orthodox Marxist version, now, after the failed test of history, after its "desecration by Bolshevik practice," will require, Potresov declares, far more time than the period of the "law-and-order party's" overweening dominance of Russia.

FROM THE XXth CENTURY POLITICAL THOUGHT

Publication prepared by Anatoly Prokopenko

Wit works woe

Alexander Potresov (1869-1934)

Tomorrow May 5 New Style is a centenary! At some other time a veritable phalanx of literary researches would have no doubt been timed for this date, in the same way as a vast Shakespearean bibliography accumulated for jubilee occasions, in the same way as in our country a rather considerble Pushkiniana has amassed over the past quarter century.

How could it be otherwise? This is a genius of world stature! A man whose impact on minds throughout the second half of the 19th century up to the present is truly unexampled. A scholar, who comprised a whole epoch in an entire range of disciplines related to the social sciences, and withal a fighter who with his own hand lit the flame illumining the road before the working masses in all countries.

What indeed could be more fascinating and edifying than the individuality of Marx, that point of the confluence of causes stimulated by the British labour movement, French socialism and German philosophy, which so miraculously engendered a truly stupendous creative effort? How boundlessly great is the sum total of his achievements, of his innovative contributions to both the abstract science and the practice of life. How important it would be to tally Marxism's trophies amongst the proletariat within the ranks of those who so openly and straightforwardly following the road that the great teacher indicated and paved, who unashamedly call themselves his pupils, as well as the gains Marx's teachings have secured in the greatly hostile environment of bourgeois society.

After all, despite all its hate of this architect of scientific socialism and inspirer of the modern international of working men, this bourgeois society failed to completely wall itself off from those ideological influences deriving from so poisonous a source, and while vilifying him, nevertheless had to borrow much from Marx in a plainly underhand manner, without acknowledging these borrowings and often bending over backwards to adapt the fruits of his obstinate genius to the requirements and likings of modern capitalist society.

Though Marx died a long time ago, some 35 years now, he is still alive, is still that magnet without which the grandest movement of modern times would lose its entire character, its generalizing implication. He perhaps is more typical than any currently living writer or practical worker, as he integrates the entire historic meaning of this movement, the entire power of its justification, the entire independent nature of conviction that it is ordained to remake the present system and is architect of the coming system. Marx represents the grandest of negations and the grandest of assertions of our day and age, is the key figure of our present saga.

Still one would find it hard today to undertake an all-embrasing analysis of this epic figure. We would find it practically impossible to calmly examine his ideological heritage, to weigh his attainments on the scales of historical criticism. For us citizens of the former state of Russia, Marx stands forth not only as a heroic personage of the European saga, as for us the said saga is obscured and pushed far into the background by our specifically Russian dramatic comedy in which Marx is but a neutral personage attracting our entire public notice.

Marx is the unwilling Chatsky of our Russian "Wit Works Woe," however, a Chatsky living an infinitely more serious drama, than what Griboyedov revealed in the context of the Moscow society of the 1810s and 1820s. To comprehend the contemporary Russian Marx, the Marx to whom Penza and Saratov erect monuments and in whose honour the Petrograd "Communards" of the Vyborg quarter chirsten streets, one must at least try for an instant to imagine what would have happened, should Famusov, Molchalin, Repetilov, Zagoretsky and Skalozub have suddenly taken it into their heads not to expel Chatsky, not to declare him mad, but on the contrary, to smother him in their embrace, acknowledge him as arbiter of their thoughts and start to "popularize" him. I have no doubt that in such an eventuality Chatsky, poor soul, would have

scarcely fled, seeking "where to find a place in the world for affronted feeling," but would have most likely fought back and would have indeed lost his senses.

Fortunately, for that other poor soul whose name is Marx, his bones were long put to rest in a London cemetery, and hence so fatal a denouement does not threaten. However, he could have said that not for nothing did he foresee his Russian "Wit works woe" quite some time ago, some half century back, when for the first time he like Shakespeare was first redone by Ketcher into the "venacular of native aspens". Marx already felt out of sorts, when surrounded by young radical helpers (back in the 1840s) when later learning of the success accruing to the first volume of his "Capital." That accursed Russian reality indeed struck Marx a most painfull blow, giving him as his first pupil Mikhail Bakunin, insofar as that first Russian disciple of Karl Marx destroyed the latter's "International Association of workingmen."

Marx has willy-nilly become in today's Russian history a totally uncomprehended Chatsky

Devoid of creative, constructive potential, this descendant of Russian serfdom, demonstrated, on the other hand, a supreme talent for destruction and devastation, becoming, as one French writer put it, "the apostle of global destruction," who for years ahead impeded in the Romanic countries by virtue of his anarchistic experimentation the evolution of the healty ideas of the contemporary working class movement. This first Russian "Marxist–anarchist" was actually a semi-Europeanized 19th-century Stepan Razin whom aristocratic "culture" had ennobled, merely a Razin who in the 1860s and 1870s had had nowhere to flex his muscles, who had been simply unlucky.

On the other hand, his successor had a lucky break half a century later. That half-century later, the name of Marx was employed to sanctify that objectively reactionary movement of the peasantry and soldiery, that rebellion of village against city, that Russia-wide redivision, which the inalienable spirit of Stepan Razin affected and wherein it was able to materialize. In short Stepan Razin professed himself a disciple of Karl Marx and hence it was decided to perpetuate the name of Karl Marx on a square in the Russian capital in the immediate vicinity of a similarly perpetuated Stepan Razin. Thus did the dead Bakunin wreak vengeance against the dead Marx.

However, a half-century lies between Bakunin and the present collective Stepan Razin that Ulyanov-Lenin leads. In this half century, by virtue of a fanciful combination of historical circumstances, a play of nature, the spirit of Marx sparkled with true brilliance in the person of his true disciple and continuer, the genuine true "Marxist" Plekhanov. This man combined a vast creative intelligence with an encyclopedic education and a fantastic devotion to the idea, and thereby reaped a bountiful harvest. The Marxist Plekhanov is of that Russian culture which today is our sole pride. In Marxism he represents that great constellation of Russian enlighteners, who, starting with the "impassioned" Vissarion Belinsky were so brilliantly continued by Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov.

However, the Marxist Plekhanov is as much of a "misunderstanding" in the context of Russian reality, as Marx himself. He is a similar "clever absurdity," the embryo of what is to come but yet does not exist. For that reason today when the townsfolk of Penza and Saratov unveil monuments to Karl Marx, so greatly akin to Stepan Razin, at the same time, the great disciple of the great teacher lies abed unrecognized and forgotten in a sanatorium outside Petrograd, greatly a victim of those self-same half-Marxists ad Bolsherazinites who months ago broke into his home and almost killed him. Plekhanov is complement to Marx. They are two sides of one and the same Russiam drama, the drama of Chatsky in a society, which has yet to outgrow Skalozub and Famusov. That self-same Russian "Wit Works Woe" today stands in the way of an impartial all-inclusive analysis of the epic figure of Karl Marx. (*May 4, 1918*).

Though ten years have passed since the October take-over, the October spirit still lives. True, the upsurge of popular fervour has long yieded to the deadwater of suppression, yet the authority this upsurge brought to the surface of Russia's statehood lives on, marking its jubilee and desirous of ruling for years to come. The controversy continues: is the October spirit the continuation of revolution or the start of reaction?

For the stalwart émigré that issue does not exist. For him what has taken place is simply an episode from the annals of crime conspicuous merely for its unprecedented scope. Nothing more. But for the serious, who wish to place this spirit in its historical perspective this is the basic issue, which unfortunately many have still to resolve.

Thus, in advanced socialist Europe with but a few exceptions to this day the October spirit and the power it brought into being is seen despite all the repugnance of the dictatorship. as revolution; while the October power exists, the revolution consequently continues and when it falls, the revolution's gains will fall with it. Source of this concept is the point made that the October take-over came at the confluence of worker and peasant moods, desires and demands of 1917, along with the initiative of seizure displayed by the party which from the outset claimed to be the extreme left of the international socialist movement.

So how, one may ask, can the thus tied knot of the new ultra-revolutionary authority, that iron broom which has swept away the last remaining specks of tsarism, how can this new regime, this "proletarian dictatorship," which has announced "the last decisive fight" against world capital, suddenly allow itself to be qualified as the end of revolution and the start of reaction? Can one aver that the plus has become minus and that history, having lost its way, has generated a backward movement, instead of a step forward? Regrettably, the entire reasoning forgets that the machinery of history, the logic of things in no way dovetails with the logic, or the more so the psychology of its personages. These personages sincerely think they are making history, "pushing" history forwards, but according to the well-known German expression, not they are "pushing" but are "pushed." Not they order things, but are ordered by the state of things, which either metamorphoses them in its image, or when unable to do so chucks them overboard as so much useless scrap. The October take-over and the ten-year afterword offer a classical specimen of the way life teaches a lesson to overweening demiurge "creators," making puppets of heroes and causing revolutionists to serve reaction. Indeed, racked by the years of war, the worker, peasant and soldier masses accepted as a revelation the sermon that the demagogic Bolshevik party preached to reach peace at once and immediately share everything amongst everyone. For this revelation these masses not only failed to support their newly elected Constituent Assembly, but surrendered to the will of the dictatorial authority born of the

October spirit. However, at this point the logic of sentiments and desires ends and the logic of historical regularity begins.

Peace was at once reached. But at what price? The obnoxious Brest division of Russia was not carried forward solely because Entente defeated Wilhelm's German Empire against the volition of Soviet power.

Sharing everything amongst everyone? Only abolition of the squirearchy for which the way had been paved by the entire process of history, wholly accorded with expectations, despite the stupidity with which this was implemented by elemental popular unrest, on the one hand, and Soviet regimentation, on the other. Sharing of the property of the capitalist bourgeoisie was not to come about. Instead of the private bourgeois capitalist, there soon emerged the official thousand-headed managerial bureaucrat, who behind communist phraseology flattering the proletariat, actually browbeat them and reduced them to the common denominator of equality in poverty.

History treated worst though the demiurges themselves, that self-same revolutionary Bolshevik party, which having usurped power, sought to dupe history. Indeed, if by Lenin's efforts Marxism could be falsified and replaced by the salient doctrine of rationalism and voluntarism, why not similarly falsify history as such? As was to be expected, the bill had to be paid at once for such foolish irreverence.

As soon as Bolshevism, having entrenched itself in its state positions, conceived the idea of transforming these positions into a springboard for leaping into the domain of the promises by reason of which it had obtained power, the machinery of historical regularity, which the demiurges had sought to fool, at once made itself unreservedly felt. The dilemma before them was either, rejecting their promises to renounce power, which would have afforded the honest solution, or to retain power but alas, merely to trigger off an initially unnoticeable but subsequently more and more manifest inevitable degeneration from a revolutionary utopian party of all exploited into a wilful group of exploiting oligarchs.

The dictatorial authority which at the outset had called for world revolution gradually became one of systematic hypocrisy and falsehood, eventually turning into despotism shorn of claptrap and all the trappings of the previous masquerade. The supreme revenge history wreaked was that having confronted the demiurges with this dilemma it allowed this shameful metamorpohis to develop without hindrance and achieve finality. It showed no lenience towards the demiurges, not bothering to remove them away in time from the highroad of movement.

The revolution that had emerged from the clamour of war, that was born in a hysterical travail of jittery morbid nerves, cherished like no other, boundless dreams, yet possessed the most modest, poorest and limited possibilities.

This contradiction, a subjectively unbearable one, objectively made of the country the destined victim of hallucination and through the medium of such hallucination reduced it to the wreck and ruin of outright reaction (*November 7, 1927*).

■

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I ask you to forget me

After a check-up by American psychiatrists, the author of this letter was struck off the register in a Soviet nuthouse. Two years later the Americans decided to inquire about the patient's health...

In *New Times* (No.5, 1991) I read an article by Peter Raddaway, entitled "Czars of Official Psychiatry" and decided to apply through you to this American psychiatrist...

It so happened that in my life I have served terms in various camps. In 1942 the German deported me from Nikolaevsk to Königsberg, where they put me in a special camp from which I fled a year later. In 1951 I was put into a Stalinist camp – they found the manuscript of my anti-Stalinist work "Sullen moneky herd"... I was convicted under article 58/10, but in 1955, I was set free and the charge was rescinded.

On February 22, 1983 I was arrested again standing charges on three points. First, that I am the author of the book *I take Away to Abandoned Villages*. The book was published in Paris by YMCA – Press. Second – my poem *Torch Above the Crimea* was circulated in Samizdat editions. Third, KGB intercepted the typewritten text of second book *Through the Eternal Moan*. I was also accused of writing letters to the UN on behalf of the Crimean Tatars.

I was held in a Tashkent prison from February 22 to March 8, 1983. But then, perhaps realizing that it is impossible to try me in open court, they cooked up "a case history." For this I was sent for psychiatric examination at a Tashkent hospital. I spent there a little over a month, but the examination disappointed the investigators – they declared me healthy. After that I was held for a month in Moscow's Butyrka prison and then subjected to examination at the Serbsky Central Scientific Research Institute of Forensic Psychiatry. The institute's commission of experts established that I suffered from "languid schizophrenia" and I was taken back to Tashkent and placed in a special ward of its mental hospital.

Had I been tried in open court under article 191/4 of the Criminal Code of the Uzbek SSR ("spreading of deliberately false evidence defaming the Soviet state and social system") I could have been sentenced to a term of 3 years. Without a trial I spent in prison 4 years, 6 months and 21 days. I recalled with anguish the Tashkent prison in the dirty cell of the special hospital. Choking down special bread – flour mixed with chaff and bran – I longed for prison rations.

I was released on September 12, 1987. But having set me free they put me under the surveillance of the militia and the Tashkent psycho-neurological clinic.

Late in February 1989 my friends informed from Moscow that one may undergo an examination by a commission of American psychiatrists. And on March 4, I faced physicians from the USA. Mr. Farand, member of the commission, told me with amazement in the presence of his colleagues and the Soviet psychiatrist: "We were officially notiffied by the Health Ministry of Uzbekistan that Alexandrov was not transportable and therefore could not fly to Moscow."

As soon as the American commission examined me, in October 1989 the Tashkent mental clinic struck me off the register, "forgetting" to inform the Chilanzar district department of internal affairs of this. Therefore, I have been under the surveillance by the militia for more than two years, althouth the article under which an action was brought against me has long been abolished.

To tell you what happened later I'll refer to my letter to the USSR Minister of Public Health: "On February 26, 1991 the doctor of Tashkent psycho-neurological clinic, R.F. Terkulov called me in and said that at the request of American psychiatrists I must meet with the doctors of the psycho-neurological clinic. I refused to meet with the representatives of punitive medicine. Why should I after all the commissions, all humiliations of the clinic... The next day the head physician showed to my wife the telegram which said that the USSR Ministry of Public Health was very much concerned about my health.

Dear Minister, why did you apply to the Tashkent psycho-neurological clinic if I am struck off the register? If you and your colleagues are taking my health so close to your heart, you should have appealed to a dentist. I don't have a single tooth. I lost a part of them at Soviet hard labour camps in 1951–1955. And the rest were knocked off by the medical orderly in the presence of the chief of special psychiatric department of Tashkent prison Yelena Deborina. Seeing all this she said: "You were not beaten up, Grigory Matveyevich. It is forbidden to beat people in our clinic." I have been to Soviet and German camps, I was beaten up with rubber and wooden sticks but nobody asked me at the time of my flogging was I being beaten or not. You could have also applied to a urologist. Orderlies from among the convicted criminals a teamed up to knock off my kidney. You can apply to otolaryngologist. As soon as the nurse who seems to have never worked as an otolaringologist, was "irrigating" my right ear forcefully and without my request, I became deaf in that ear. This happened in forensic medical examination department of the city nuthouse. You may apply to the cardiologist who, after studying my cardiogram in 1987, asked: for how long I starved to bring my heart to the gravest dystrophy...

I demand one thing: leave me alone and do not traumatize me even with a chance encounter with Soviet psychiatrists."

This is what I wrote to the USSR Health Ministry. Through *New Times* magazine I would also like to apply to American psychiatrists. I thank them for being citizens of a free country, who still remember me. But I ask for a great favour: dear American doctors, never again ask the Soviet Health Ministry any questions about my health.

Grigory Alexandrov

Drawing by A. Khodorovsky (Poland)

Three years ago, **Alexander Nikishin,** a young journalist working for the *Znamya* magazine, won popularity due to the film *After the Lethargy,* which he made together with his brother Andrei Nikishin. The film told the truth about dramatic events in the Baltics (see *New Times* No. 35/89).

At present the 35-year-old Alexander is attracting public attention again as founder and head of the *End of the Century* anthology. Alexander wants the new anthology to present Russian émigré literature and the authors who are still not published in the thick "official" magazines. In general, the *End of the Century* will be quite different from our literary magazines which have developed a rather rigid image in the decades of their existence.

"Having worked at the *Znamya* magazine, I realialized that I would like to publish a readers' digest, which would be fun to read from the first to the last page, and which would be free from 'classical boredom,' Alexander says. "Our literary magazines are too boring and outdated even in their names. Why *Znamya* (the Banner), why *Ogonyok* (the Light), why *October* and not September or March? I want our magazine to keep away from politics even as far as its name is concerned. The End of the Century is just what we need.

The first issue of the magazine is already on sale. The magazine plans to publish works by Vasily Aksyonov, Eduard Limonov, Anatoly Gladilin, Alexander Roslyakov and Anatoly Goryushkin. Nikishin decided to make an easy-reading magazine, free from politics. The first issue, however, carries a story about Lenin's head being stolen from the Mausoleum.

"We published this story not because of politics, but simply because it's written in a good Bulgakov style," the editor-in-chief explains.

It was not easy to begin publishing the magazine. For instance, when the first issue was being prepared for publication, the magazine staff had no telephone in their office. Alexander recalls how he was calling a member of the staff from a telephone booth in the street on a frosty winter day, asking the man to call Limonov in Paris to settle a question about the publication of the latter's story in the magazine. People waiting for their turn were knocking on the door of the booth.

When the anthology consolidates its position, Alexander plans to set up a fund together with *Interbook* to help budding writers.

* * *

Forty-seven-year-old poet **Vadim Perelmuter** has published his second book of verse *Stikhotvoreniya* (the Poems). It took 15 years for the first book, *The Diary,* to break through the line of literary bureaucrats. The reviews written by censors (not for the broad public) said that the poetic world of Vadim Perelmuter was "extremely narrow and subjective." Other reviews vigilantly stated that the poet's verse could have a double meaning and concerned the realities of the spiritual life of tzarist Russia as much as our present day life. His poem *The Sum–up,* which

wasn't published then, said the following about the situation in the country: "Social Realism – although the name is crazy,
But everyone, young men and old alike,
With or without brain,
Must bow before it."

The "defenders" of literature were blocking the way for another book by Perelmuter, his book about Vyazemsky. At an open party bureau meeting of the *Detskaya Literatura* Publishers in 1985, the book which had received the most flattering reviews by experts was labelled "crudely distorting the Marxist-Leninist theory." Even Academician Likhachev's intercession did not help. The book has still not been published. Right now for commercial reasons.

In the years of "stagnation" the poet found "artistic" refuge in Armenia. Armenia and Georgia gave shelter then to those who were excluded from official periodicals.

At present Perelmuter is busy publishing the literary heritage of Sigismund Krzyzanowski, a profound and original writer, playwright, and literary critic. Perelmuter read about him in Georgy Shengeli's notebooks and then for many months searched for the unknown writer's manuscripts in government and personal archives.

B.Vainstein

A visa for Bukovsky

At first **Vladimir Bukovsky** was denied an entry visa to the USSR, and our magazine wrote about it in its issue No. 15, 1991. The British government demanded a reply to its question, "Why?" And the government of the Russian Federation insisted on receiving Bukovsky as their guest. And so he came home from where he had been thrown out and exchanged for Luis Corvalan. Does this respectable gentleman, a graduate of Cambridge University ("I have actually graduated from Cambridge during my prison term in the city of Vladimir, and I had only to pass the exams," says Bukovsky), a neurosurgeon and politician, who is personally acquainted with Thatcher, Kohl, and Bush and is a world-famous human rights activist, look like the 34-year-old prisoner, so bitterly hated by his state at that time?

The crowds that met Bukovsky at the airport see him as a symbol of the struggle for human rights, a symbol of courage and hope. "Here comes our Havel", said someone before the beginning of Bukovsky's press conference.

Bukovsky says that he did not come here until now because there was no one to visit here, since everyone was in a state of euphoria. Now that the public's eyes are opening and people are loosing their illusions concerning restructuring, and it has become obvious that without changing the social system there can be no tangible reforms, serious struggle has begun. Bukovsky has come to make his own contribution to this struggle with everything he has at his disposal. He is surprised that although people sympathize with the miners' demands they continue working. He believes that a general political strike is the only possible peaceful way to get rid of Communist government. He believes that inmates in a labour camp must obey the laws of the labour camp community. And these laws read: if one person in a prison cell goes on a hunger strike, all the other people in the cell follow his example. If one brigade goes on strike, the entire camp follows suit. And there is no other way to achieve your goal. Bukovsky is sure that today people must let bygones be bygones. For his part, he is ready to hold out his hand to anyone, not only to a former anti-communist, but to a former communist too, whether he is a Central Committee employee, his own interrogator from the KGB, or his own jailer at the Lefortovo or Vladimir prisons. There's only one consideration that matters: is this or that person really ready to work for the freedom of his homeland?

Vladimir Bukovsky claims that we must make a choice now: either the communist regime is done away with in the coming few months or in automn we'll face hunger and endless wars.

Tatiana Ivanova

Thirty-one-year-old **Vladimir Gromov,** the director of the Polar Odysseus Travellers' Club in the city of Petrozavodsk, has decided to hold a second youth competition "Polar Robinson." For information about the first competition see our issue No. 14, 1990.

"The competition consists of three tours," Vladimir says. "The participants in the finals will be divided in pairs and left on five islands in the White Sea. They will have a minimum of necessities, emergency supplies and means of emergency communication. To use the emergency supplies means to admit one's defeat. The Robinsons will have to spend close to a month on the island. And not only to survive, but to make the best of their situation and to avoid hardships without breaking the ecological balance. After the competition all the participants will visit the Solovet Islands."

Last year up to a thousand people took part in a similar competition. If you are willing to follow their example send your request to: 185610, Petrozavodsk, Kosmonavta Titova ul., 3, the newspaper *Komsomoletz,* "Polar Robinson—91."

Vladimir Gromov received the education of a physicist and is an expert in lasers. He has been going in for tourism for two years. He travelled all around Russian North, sailed along the Ladoga and Onega rivers and the White Sea, and took part in building traditional Russian boats. In one of these he plans to sail through seven seas to the shores of Italy. He discovered a Northern river rout from Scandinavia to the Soviet Union. He even took foreign tourists along this rout after receiving the permission from the KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov.

* * *

The biggest success of the theatrical season in Kaunas is the play *Sandy Claviers* staged in the city drama theater by the well-known Lithuanian theatre director **Jonas Jurasas.**

His artistic career began at the Vilnius academic drama theatre which he attended upon graduation from the State Theatrical Institute in 1967, and continued at the drama theater in Kaunas. During the five years he spent there Jurasas did a lot, but it took great efforts. His production — a grotesque parable *Hunting for mammoths* was banned. *The House of Humbleness* was accused of a lack of internationalism. Even his interpretation of Mikhail Shatrov's *The Bolsheviks* was criticized.

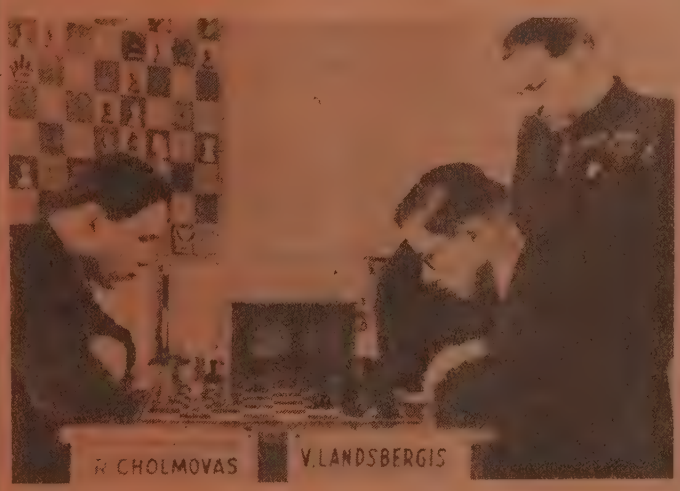
When Jurasas made an attempt to stage a drama about love, *Barbora Radvilaite,* he was told that the production was overfilled with religious sentiments, spirituality, and nationalism. Besides, the staging of the drama coincided with the political events in Kaunas — one of the city residents burnt himself in the city centre and a demonstration was held in the alley of Liberty. Jurasas was accused of fanning political passions and nationalism with his art. Then he wrote a letter of protest to the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture. Here is a quotation from that letter: "The road of compromise was the only path which I was forced to take in an attempt to save my maimed works for the public. I cannot accept the truths forced on me from the outside. An artist who implements the truths alien to him, becomes alien to himself." In 1974 he emigrated to the United States.

In New York he staged *Macbeth* and a play *Prisoners* about the marriage of dissident Alexander Ginsburg. His production of the play *The Suicide* by Nikolai Erdman was successfully staged on Broadway. In Japan Jurasas staged Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard.*

As soon as he found it possible to return home, Jonas Jurasas came back to Lithuania. *Sandy Claviers* is in a way a prayer, in which Jurasas speaks of eternal values, the power of the human spirit which will never reconcile itself to violence.

* * *

Landsbergis plays chess



Not so long ago 59-year-old leader of Lithuanian parliament **Vytautas Landsbergis** was a conservatory professor. But few people know that in his youth he nearly became a professional chess player.

Here is what grandmaster Ratmir Kholmov, a many-time champion of Lithuania, recalls: "I met Landsbergis 40 years ago, in 1951. He was a modest, lean, and pale young man. Apparently shy of his height, he was stooping. Vytautas, a student of the Vilnius conservatory, played chess quite seriously — he was a Candidate Master.

"That year we met in the finals of the republic's championship. I got the impression that he was a very taciturn person. I still remember how little he spoke when we were analyzing the game we had just finished playing. Landsbergis must have stopped taking part in serious chess tournaments shortly afterwards, although in that tournament he had performed quite decently. The future political leader decided not to link his life with chess. Perhaps, he didn't want to follow the example of the republic's champion, who could hardly make both ends meet."

Incidentally, the then would-be world champion Tigran Petrosyan took part in that "historic" championship, (hors concours), and so did the patriarch of Lithuanian chess Vladas Mikenas who recently turned 80 (he is watching the game in the photograph). Landsbergis forced each of them to end in a draw!

Photo from Shakhmaty v SSSR (Chess in the USSR) magazine

Near Alaska, but from the Russian hinterland

Alexander Elagin declines the Sotheby's bid

A new way of life? New values?

Just before the 1987 Sotheby's auction in Moscow, its experts visited Alexander Elagin, proposing that he put up his paintings for sale. However, he declined, a seemingly unique act as all believed fame, wealth and one's further career depended on that.

However, with his habit of steering clear of the world's vanities this Siberian taiga recluse refused to accept the Sotheby's proposition. Actually its experts had been attracted by the tales told about his somewhat exotic isolation.

Indeed, Elagin spends months on end with gun and dog hunting in Yakutia. He is taiga born and bred, speaks Evenk, is friends with local shamans, is familiar with the habits of the bear, and can, if he wants to, tame a wolf.

Only now and again does he spend a brief interval in Moscow to gird himself for more taiga expeditions and painting. He painted his first pictures at the age of 30, acquiring the technique by a hit-and-miss method devoid of academic schooling. He learned "art" at the Pushkin Museum, where he worked as locksmith, specially to gain access to its depositories and analyze its celebrated paintings from close up.

The Candle. Alexander Elagin

By the time he obtained his first glimpse of that great American realist Wyeth, he had already produced his first efforts. He was envious, as unlike Wyeth who painted from nature, Elagin, paradoxically enough, does not have that opportunity, for the simple reason that when out in the taiga all thought of painting is completely driven out of his mind.

Nevertheless all Elagin's pictures would seem to depict with a protocol-like fidelity the taiga, a "world not made with human hands," as the artist is himself fond of saying. For anyone familiar with modern art they would seem simple, artless, the more so as they are totally outside the mainstream of 20th century esthetics.

Every time Elagin strikes out into the taiga, he feels himself a pioneer, akin to the Russians who first trekked across Yakutia in the early 17th century. His hunting expeditions revive the mentality of his forebears, imparting enviable liberty and the courage to work a **simple** art, untempted by all the complexities and inventions of our present day and age.

His way of life is eccentric, moreover costly and dangerous. A luxury that few can afford today, the lot of a virtually unique strong-willed individuality.

However, the viewer should not confuse Elagin's ascetic art with a life of austerity. Unquestionably not for the so-called man-in-the-street, it must definitely not be commercialized. Having withstood the temptation to achieve overnight fame by putting up his pictures for the Moscow's Sotheby's auction, Elagin evaded the danger of falling victim to the transient fashion for everything Soviet.

The three last years Elagin has not sold a single picture, an all the more noteworthy development in that the said period witnessed soaring art sales.

No painter either by training or way of life, Elagin incarnates a new modus vivendi and new values comprising the essence of his creative effort. He is unhampered by either the fuss and bother of civilization or the conventionalities of present-day art.

There is nothing sensational about his pictures except for the resurgence of bygone aesthetic taste, which art seemed to have long since foregone. Yet this serves to overcome that inferiority complex in the face of avant-garde art, that, though so bountifully seeded, failed to yield much of a crop on Russian soil.

Elagin's efforts are pregnant with an infatuation for the simple. They are not oriented, I daresay, on the connoisseur familiar with the subtleties of techniques and manners. Only people for whom an aesthetic taste of their is paramount will enjoy his art. However often such amateurs intrude as savages, the charm they come to radiate is so great that sooner or later they set the tune.

Elagin believes himself psychologically not of this day and age, but rather of the pioneers who colonized new territories. No wonder he applies the categories of hunting to civilization, maintaining that the same laws of the wild operate in both art markets and Big Business. Which may be very true.

The artist sees his potential customer among all liberty seeking folk familiar with the opulence of the "world not made with human hands." Evidently few would appreciate his efforts. For that matter, no aspect of art has many who really appreciate it. Indeed "art for the people" is that harmful fallacy to which we, sad to say, have grown used.

The true values of art are all the greater when they appeal to an exclusive elite. Though, the elite, determine the social taste, they themselves need as much opportunities to demonstrate their taste.

Within the context of the current motley mosaic of a free, brisk, commercialized art, the dreary absence of "stars" is especially manifest. Not artists are to blame: rather is the social environment at fault. Customers, art lovers and connoisseurs must themselves mature to attain a free, open, striking, even extravagant, display of their own taste. Which is no simple thing to achieve.

Paradoxically enough, maximum, even extravagant daring is needed to act the obvious power of simplicity acknowledged.

The Soviet media speculates at length about one or another "brilliant but totally unrecognized artist." One would greatly exaggerate though to call Elagin unacknowledged. In his case demand exceeds supply, enabling him to choose buyers with rare exactitude.

These circumstances have ensured potential Russian art patrons the chance to create a name worthy of the artist within the context of our spiritual life, to appreciate and accept the challenge he presents, which could qualify as "back to the fundamentals" as restoration of the very beginnings of our life, as revival of the Russian people's genetic memory.

Elagin has brought this message from the depths of the Russian hinterland. That the new wave from the East is not fortuitous is plainly manifest. Indeed looking at the map of the USSR we see that Yakutia is nearer Alaska than Moscow. No wonder Elagin's art reveals an organic bond with that of provincial America.

From diametrically opposed situations – poverty and degradation in this country and abundance in America – mankind moves along the same lines yet: towards the restoration of the fundamental values. This is one of the phenomena of the late 20th century in Western civilization.

By virtue of their shocking naturalness Elagin's efforts may definitely exert a magnetic appeal for all able to note the new winds of change. His time has arrived and his success is inevitable. What is still obscure though is how this will come about, inasmuch as the related mechanism is being created anew from scratch in this country.

In this respect, as in any field of activity, there is much room for creativity. Future art patrons, merchants and collectors, are today about to restore the Russian art market and are themselves learning how to create "stars." Which holds a greater lure than the demeaning effort to follow "stars" we did not light.

Yelena Pivovarova

On May 15 the Manege Picture Gallery proudly presents a selected collection of Elagin's efforts. Collectors, banks and corporations are kindly asked to call telephone: 202-82-52

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Church and fashion

Where in Moscow's yellow drabness will one find a place of purity? No doubt only in the churches, whose bells again ring out, where rites and divine services are again conducted, churches reopened after decades of bars and locks

In recent years Moscow, of which I incidentally am rather fond, has definitely changed. True, it is still not the golden-domed Moscow it once was. After all, hobnobbing with churches are a multitude of stalls displaying a multitude of small icons, which sell like hot cakes if one may be pardoned for employing this metaphor. The pendulum has swung to its other extreme. For years on end I heard it stated that religion was "an opium for the people." Now I hear that Marxism is that opium. The truth, though, I think lies between the two extremes, as the forbidden fruit at which we now clutch is not that.

Alexander Pushkin, upon making the sign of the cross and abiding by an old Russian belief, when he turned off the road to meet a priest, claimed that "good taste was an exceptional sense of proportion." He would have taken critical stock of what we deify today as for years on end, a matter so common to him was, as I said before, forbidden fruit.

One swings from extreme to extreme out of hopeless despair as a rule. Our present blind faith is what we vilified before is such an extreme. It is as artificial as yesterday's separation of Church from state, as frightening as separation of soul from body.

The Descent into Limbo. Sixteenth century

Russian Orthodoxy always had the two planks of the Outer and Inner Churches. Today as we make the sign of the cross and venerate the icons we merely pay tribute to fashion, to the Outer Church, in the belief that religion and faith, the Outer and Inner Churches are the same.

I no longer believe what I believed but recently. I also pass by churches. The new picture gallery exhibits old Russian paintings. From its walls the huge eyes of apostles, archangels and saints look down at us. On display are icons from the medieval Russian town of Pskov; they depict St. John the Baptist, St. Peter the Metropolitan, St. John "the Golden Tongued," St. Basil the Great, the Nativity, the Ascension, the Kiss of Judas and the Crucifixion. Many are on view for the first time. They have been assembled from museums from all over the country and restored: some icons were opened up only recently, others gathered dust in depositories. The restored fragments of the 14th-century frescoes on show were excavated by archeologists. One may conclude that Pskov painting is conspicuous for its stylistic variety and individuality; it preserved its own tradition, even after Muscovy incorporated it in the early 16th century.

These icons do not call for a lit candle or veneration as in a church. They have nothing in common with what is taking place all around either in our current life with its politics and superstitions or in the official Church as they also have nothing in common with the tormented Outer Church, they are indeed eternal.

Tatiana Chernova

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